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Sunset

EXCLUSIVE
BOOK EXCERPT

**Chef Joanne
Weir's
Favorite
Recipes**

Fall Road Trips

*Mountains,
lakes & desert
on California's
Highway 395*

**Getaways in
New Mexico,
Denver &
CA's Central
Coast**

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Edible
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SEPTEMBER 2015





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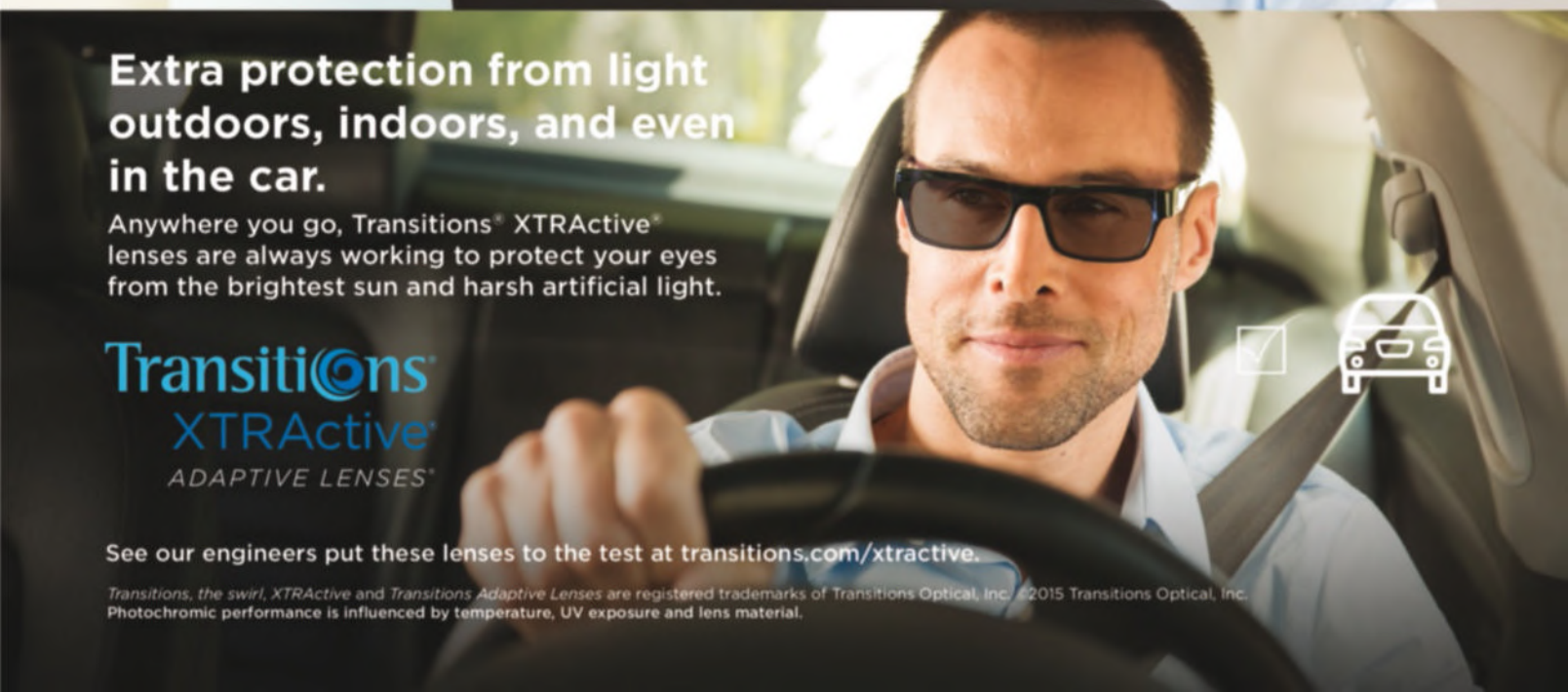
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September

Joanne Weir's halibut and squash ribbon skewers are inspired by Italy but distinctly her own.

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LIFE, DEVoured

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September

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Our full guide to nutrition, ingredients, and techniques: sunset.com/cookingguide.



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The best containers, flowers, and edibles to plant now: sunset.com/fallplanting.



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San Diego *Happiness is calling*



Scenes from the road (from far left): Tom in Lone Pine; Mono Lake; road sign near Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery; Tom's wife, Sara, and the kids at Lundy Lake.



WISH I WERE THERE

SUNSET STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER Tom Story spends something like 250 days a year on the road for us, so when I learned that U.S. Highway 395—the subject of our cover story this month—was his all-time favorite road trip, I had to ask why.

“As soon as you cross the Sierra, you drop down into this other world,” says Story, who has been taking his kids to view the fall color at June Lake for years. “Living in the Bay Area, with life getting faster and more complex all the time, Highway 395 for me is like island time in Hawaii.” Talking about this epic road, Story punctuates his speech with thoughtful pauses and poetic sighs. I could hear him relaxing at the memory. I wanted some of that.

I haven’t trekked to the eastern side of the Sierra for some years, so while our story (page 48) gives dozens of spots to choose from, I asked Tom to design a perfect first day for me. His recommendation: “Drive to Yosemite and eat lunch in the piano bar at The Ahwahnee. Then head to June Lake, check in at the Double Eagle Resort, and go to Mono Lake at twilight to watch the colors of the sky and water change as the sun sets.”

Sounds heavenly. (See you there.)

And as long as I’m raving about Tom’s work (also visible on Instagram *@sunsetphoto*), let me point out another way to view it: in the beautiful photography in Joanne Weir’s brand new cookbook, *Kitchen Gypsy*, excerpted on page 70. His favorite recipe from Weir’s book is also mine: the tequila-spiked chocolate shake on page 77. Sounds a little bizarre, but I swear it’s the best use of tequila anyone has ever devised.

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THOMAS J. STORY (4); UPPER LEFT: EBBE ROE YOVINO-SMITH

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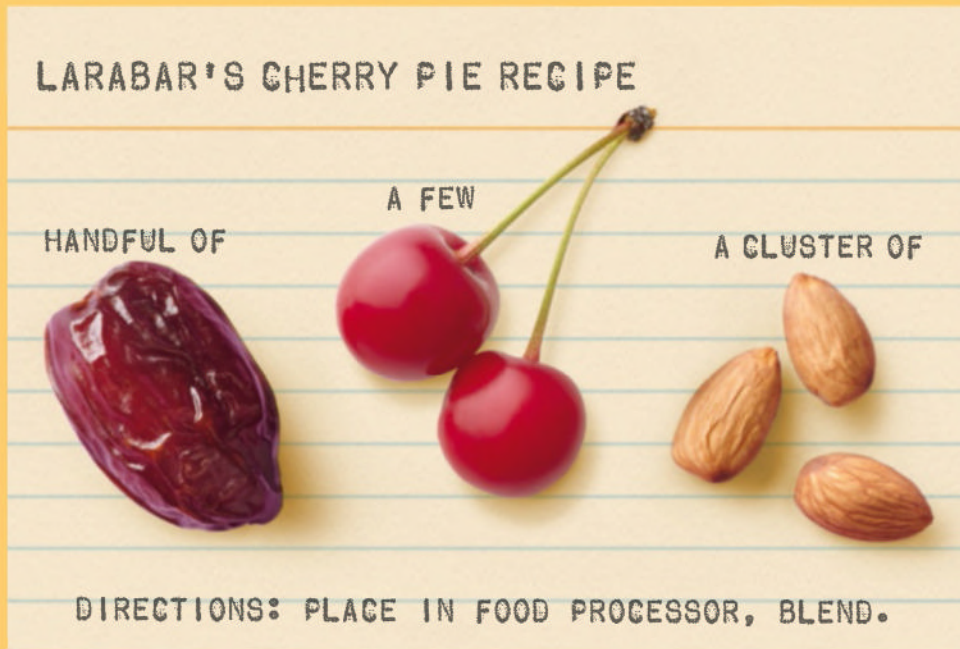
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BEST OF THE WEST

WHAT WE'RE TRACKING THIS MONTH



Blue ribbon days

Not that there's anything wrong with the modern incarnation of the state fair—Led Zeppelin tribute bands aside—but come fall, we start yearning for something a little more traditional. A little more ... harvesty. So we'll be heading to the fifth annual National Heirloom Expo at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds in Santa Rosa. The heritage breeds here include not just gloriously bizarre tomatoes but also the likes of Suri alpacas, Silver rabbits, Ancona ducks, and four-horned Navajo-Churro sheep. Plus bluegrass bands and gospel singers, an antique-tractor show, a rooster crowing competition, and, of course, the return of the giant pyramid o' squash. \$15; Sep 8–10; theheirloomexpo.com.

Skin in the game

BEST INNOVATION

In Alaska alone, some 2 billion pounds of fish waste are dumped overboard or in a landfill each year. To those of us who care about sustainable fish catches, that's a problem—and an opportunity, at least for entrepreneur Craig Kasberg. His Juneau-based company, Tidal Vision, has developed a non-toxic way to tan Alaska sockeye salmon skins. Starting this summer, the company's been sewing the strikingly patterned leather into slim, stylish wallets. Next up: antibacterial T-shirt fabric made from king-crab shells. Really. Wallets from \$75; tidalvisionusa.com.



MADE OUT OF SALMON LEATHER!



BEST BEFORE & AFTER

HIGH-TEST FUEL

Once upon a time, the historic Gilmore Oil filling station at Highland and Willoughby Avenues in Hollywood looked like something straight out of *Double Indemnity* or *L.A. Confidential*—and it actually did appear as a location in such movies as *48 Hrs.* But the 1935 structure fell upon hard times back in the 1990s and has been boarded up ever since. Until, that is, a Starbucks store designer spotted it, came up with the idea of turning it into a coffee stop, and voilà—a winning example of adaptive reuse, and one more piece of L.A.'s heritage saved. 859 N. Highland; starbucks.com.

BEST BITES

DINNER & A SHOWHOUSE

If you haven't yet checked out our latest Idea House, perhaps this will be the nudge you need: On September 9, the 11th annual Denver Food and Wine festival kicks off with a progressive wine-pairing dinner at the house, cooked by some of the region's most prominent chefs—Elise “Panzano” Wiggins and Hosea “Blackbelly” Rosenberg among them. You (and 120 of your new best friends) will move through the remodeled midcentury house and gardens, stopping at eight stations set up inside and out. Tickets are \$125, which includes wine and cocktail pairings. denverfoodandwine.com.

FLEX TIME

BEST MINDFUL TECH

It sometimes seems as if the West has as many yoga studios as it does taquerias. Still, finding a good class, and managing to fit it into your schedule, can be hard—almost impossible when you're traveling. (Believe us, we know.) One website has a solution.

YogaGlo films well-known teachers holding actual classes in its Santa Monica studio, with the camera set up among the students, so that you can practice along with them to the teacher's instructions. In the past five years, the company has built up a library of 2,500 videos that you can stream or download for later use. Now you really have no excuse to neglect your well-being—and neither do we. \$18/month; yogaglo.com.

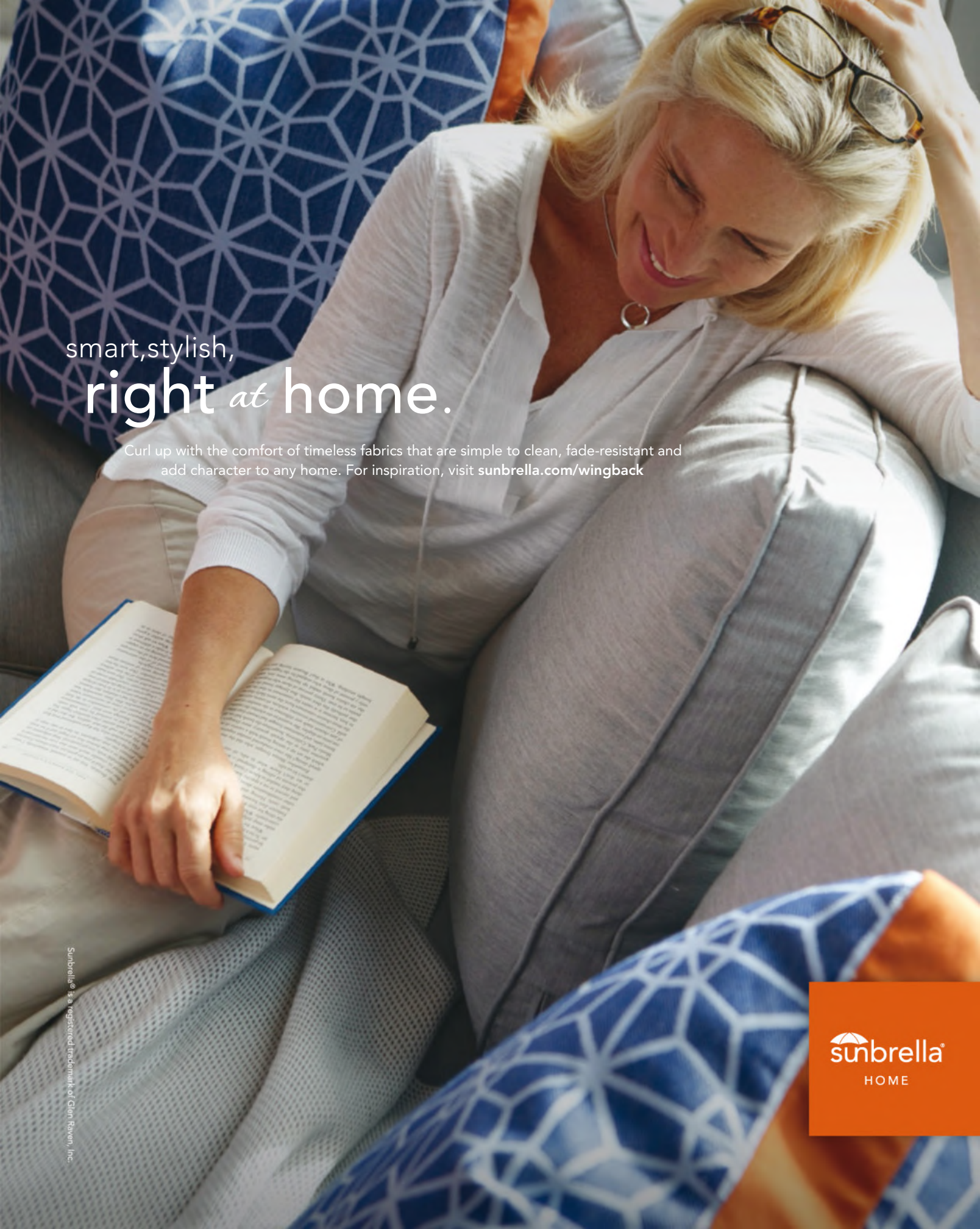
Better late than never

BEST (RE) DISCOVERY

We thought we knew all of Frank Lloyd Wright's Western masterworks, from the Hollyhock House to the Marin County Civic Center to, of course, Taliesin West. But we'd never heard of the Nakoma Resort's clubhouse, an hour's drive north of Truckee in California's Eastern Sierra. Which is strange—after all, look at the place! Turns out that although the plans date back to 1923—FLW drew them up for the Nakoma Country Club in Madison, Wisconsin—they lay unused till 2000, when the developers of this property bought them and put them, finally, to good use. Now that the resort has opened its 42-room Lodge at Nakoma, you can see for yourself. From \$189; nakomagolfresort.com.



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HOME

BEST
TREND IN
THE AIR

FOR THE BIRDS

Look up! They're on the wing again, all those cedar waxwings and yellow-rumped warblers following the great Pacific Flyway south to the Salton Sea and Mexico. And every year, hundreds of millions of them perish along the way—not shot by hunters or felled by raptors, but killed by deceptively clear glass windows and walls. (We repeat: hundreds of millions.) Bit by bit, though, their chances of making it safely to their winter home are improving. Such California cities as San Francisco, Oakland, and Sunnyvale are asking builders to hew to “bird-safe” standards: adding grills or netting to windows, installing external shades, using lights that won't lure birds to their doom. San Jose is the latest to, er, join the flock. What can homeowners do, you ask? Apply film with thin horizontal lines to any large sheets of glass, and for new windows, use nonreflective panes with embedded ceramic patterns. Also, don't put bird feeders or baths right next to windows. For more info, go to abcbirds.org.

BEST
WESTERNERBEHIND
HOLLINGSWORTH,
THE NEW BROAD
MUSEUM NEARS
COMPLETION.

URBANE RENEWAL

The French Laundry's former chef de cuisine is now helping heat up downtown L.A.

When art collectors Eli and Edyth Broad decided to build a contemporary-art museum, they picked a site smack in the middle of downtown's already simmering cultural scene. Then they turned up the gas, recruiting Tim Hollingsworth to run its restaurant, Otium. It and the museum are both set to open September 20, which also happens to be five days after the chef's first child is due. We checked in with him before things got *really* busy.

Here you'll have a more varied crowd than in Napa Valley. What's the plan? The idea is a family-style restaurant, for people to share—to create that same kind of interaction that I had as a child. You sit down at a dinner table with your family

and say, “Pass me the potatoes,” and you're all talking.

Won't some want a taste of The French Laundry? I know that expectation is going to be there, so it's, How do I achieve that in a more casual environment? I want someone to be able to come in and have a roast chicken and a beer, or an elaborate meal that's exciting and innovative. It's creating the balance between the two.

Got an example? We'll be doing savory, seasonal tarts, and one might have black-cherry marmalade, burrata cheese, tomatoes, basil, caramelized onions. The flavors are all very recognizable—it's not crazy innovative, but the way it'll be presented ... it kind of is.

If Eli Broad said, “This year, we're going to pay you in art instead of cash,” what would you ask for? Jackson Pollock. I'm not sure any of his work is in the collection, though!

Why Pollock? I think it's the way that he combines colors, lines, and the rhythm-without-being-a-rhythm in a painting. I associate it with what I do, combining colors and plating and sauces and how things actually touch a plate and how that plate gets presented to a guest. I'm nowhere near being Jackson Pollock, but he's definitely somebody I've been inspired by.

Been checking out restaurants at other museums? Um, no. For me, it's important to be a freestanding restaurant, even though I'm associated with the museum. It goes back to Mr. Broad's vision: how to get different demographics of people to the area, a cross-pollination of all different walks of life. If we can do that, I'll really be happy, and I'll consider it a true success.

BEST
PAINT
JOB

Fall color comes indoors!

That's what we love about the Plein Heir pillows painted by DIY Network host and Bay Area-based designer Shannon Kaye: the illusion that we're looking out over rolling coastal hills as they start to change hue toward the end of the day, and as the days themselves are growing shorter. Linen pillows from \$110; shannonkaye.com.





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BEST STAYS

Three new, gently quirky hotels are breaking free of the same old, same old.



The Distillery Inn, Carbondale, CO

There's no need for a designated driver at this tasting room: Marble Distilling Co. has five bedrooms, each with a gas fireplace and most with views of Mt. Sopris, handily located upstairs from its vats of vodka, "gingercello," and coffee liqueur. *From \$249; marbledistilling.com.*

The Downtown Clifton, Tucson

What happens when an L.A. rocker turned filmmaker returns to his hometown, Tucson, and rehabs a 1948 motel in its historic Five Points hood? "A dude ranch in the middle of the city," says Clif Taylor, with 10 retro-groovy rooms. *From \$110; downtowntucsonhotel.com.*



THE DOWNTOWN CLIFTON



THE LANDSBY

The Landsby, Solvang, CA

Although we may picture half-timbered houses and Little Mermaids when we think of Denmark, the country is equally famous for modern design. So this stylish 41-room hotel actually makes perfect sense in a storybook "Danish" village. *From \$225; thelandsby.com.*

Seed saviors

BEST LANDSCAPES

When *Outstanding American Gardens: A Celebration* crossed our desk, we saw the book's subtitle (25 Years of the Garden Conservancy) and thought, Oh, Connecticut lilacs and Virginia dogwoods. Then we opened it. Of the 50 public and private properties in this volume, 14 are, in fact, in the West—including this stunner, right, in Eugene, Oregon. And here's an even more important Western connection: Frank and Anne Cabot may have been Easterners, but it was visiting Ruth Bancroft in Walnut Creek, California—and hearing her worries about her collection's future—that led Frank to found the nonprofit. "As we drove away, I said to my wife, 'We have to find some way to help this woman.' And she said, rather facetiously, 'Why don't you start a garden conservancy?'" The rest, thanks to them, is gardening history. \$50; abramsbooks.com. 🌱



CENTER ROW, FROM LEFT: UAM FREDERICK, DAVID TSAY

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THE REAL SLO COUNTY

*Top-tier wineries, screensaver beaches,
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festival. Say hello to
California's Central
Coast.*

*Montaña
de Oro
State Park*

p. 20



Midway between L.A. and San Francisco, pretty San Luis Obispo has it all: kick-back wineries, one-of-a-kind shopping, and rock-star music venues. Two locals show you how to go SLO.

AS TOLD TO ERIN KLENOW



SOPHIE BOBAN-DOERING
Owner, Fromagerie Sophie
(fromageriesophie.com)



RYAN DEOVLET
Winemaker, Deovlet Wines
(deovletwines.com)



START THE DAY

Scout Coffee

1130 Garden St.; scoutcoffee.com.

SOPHIE BOBAN-

DOERING They have great espresso and pastries, but it's the teas I can't resist. Their organic mint tea is just so soothing and refreshing, and the environment is perfect: very clean and open and peaceful. I love going in there.

BEST DAY HIKE

Bishop Peak

1 Highland Dr.

RYAN DEOVLET It's maybe 45 minutes to the top. You pass under oaks, chaparral, and wild sage, then keep switch-backing before finally you've got to climb

some boulders to get to the peak. At the top, you're hovering over downtown with amazing views of the coastline and the vineyards. To the north, you can see The Nine Sisters that form the volcanic ridgeline you're standing on, which runs all the way to Morro Rock.

TAKE ME SHOPPING

Ruby Rose

1235 Monterey St.; rubyrose805.com.

SBD I never know what I'm going to find in this shop. The owner does a terrific job curating vintage and repurposed housewares and furniture. The clothes are great too. She has a way of presenting things that allows you to see their infinite possibilities, whether it's a bicycle from the 1940s or a paint-by-numbers painting of Jesus. I bought half of a



plastic rocking horse and turned it into a light fixture for our backyard!

Luna Rustica

2959 Broad St.; lunarustica.com.

RD This furniture shop feels right at home here. The owners import from artisans in Mexico, India, all over Asia. It's stuff you don't see anywhere else. I picked up a wine rack from Indonesia that's made of weathered wood faded to almost pastel colors. Beautiful.

CASUAL EATS

Thai Boat

3212 Broad; thaiboatslo.com.

RD It's hidden in a small strip mall, but as soon as you step in, you feel like you're in Asia. The owners spend a couple of months each year in Thailand, and they often come back with a cool new piece of art to hang on the wall. The spicy noodles are fun, and they make delicious curries plus authentic pad Thai, so

not sugary-spicy. The ingredients are spot-on: basil and mint and fresh kaffir lime leaves. But beware, their food has a spicy kick; their medium is most restaurants' hot.

Cafe Roma

1020 Railroad Ave.; caferomaslo.com.

RD Your quintessential Italian family joint. It's been around for 30-plus years. The matriarch, Maria Rizzo, and her sons are in there daily; you'll see them sitting at the bar eating dinner together. They make all kinds of great pastas, but I go for the house lasagna, with a meat sauce and a béchamel base, not inundated with cheese. It has a density to it without being weighty.

SHOW ME THE WATER

Cayucos/Morro Rock

RD My go-to spot is 18 minutes west, in Cayucos. If I'm surfing, I can paddle out, turn around, and see horses on the beach. It's incredible! The 7

miles between Morro Rock and Cayucos are home to some of the best beaches on the coast, in my opinion. More of the salty-dog kind of beaches, though, because the water's cooler, the weather more unpredictable. If you're not a surfer, hit the Embarcadero at Morro Bay and see Morro Rock. It's as powerful a landmark as anything you'll find on the Central Coast.

Montaña de Oro State Park

3550 Pecho Valley Rd., Los Osos; parks.ca.gov.

SBD When my nephew and niece come to visit, I take them here. The bluff trail is very scenic, and you can hear the water pounding against the rocks, creating little echoes. There's an area called Corallina Cove with



COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM CENTER: TODD SPOTH, DAVID FENTON (2), JEREMY BALL, SCOUT COFFEE PHOTO: DAVID FENTON

ASK A LOCAL

some of the best tide-pooling around; I've seen reddish seastars, green anemones, and hermit crabs walking around feeding. So many little sea creatures as the waves come in and out. You can get lost in it all.

PERFECT WINE LOOP

Baileyana-Kynsi-Claiborne & Churchill

Tasting from \$10. 5828 Orcutt Rd.; baileyana.com. 2212 Corbett Canyon Rd.; kynsi.com. 2649 Carpenter Canyon Rd.; claibornechurchill.com.

SBD The loop I like is south of town in the Edna Valley, and it's about 20 miles. Start off at **Baileyana Winery**, an old school-house on top of a hill

with beautiful views of the grapevines and easy-drinking Chardonnays. Then go to **Kynsi Winery** on Corbett Canyon. It's a dairy farm that goes back to mission days, and the Pinots are delicious, with spicier, earthier notes, which I love. Finish off at **Claiborne & Churchill**. They're located on the valley floor, so you're cradled by the rolling hills. They pour the best Alsatian-style Riesling and dry Gewürztraminer I think I've ever had. When I bring my mom, who's French, her whole face lights up.

DOWNTOWN WINE TASTING

The Wine Shed

3950 Broad; wineshed.slo.com.

SBD On the south side of San Luis

Obispo, it's a wine and beer bar/tasting room with a roll-up door and industrial furniture. They've got a great rotating selection of wines and beers on draft and in bottles. Crisp German lagers, beers from Belgium, local whites and reds, Sonoma-Napa wines too. Good locals' vibe in there.

WHERE THE COOL KIDS HANG OUT

SLO Brewing Company

1119 Garden; slobrewing.co.com.

SBD SLO's best music venue. Just the other day, Neil Young showed up and played. No one knew he was coming; it was like \$10 to see him—to see *Neil Young*! The place was so packed, they opened the side doors so people outside could hear. All sorts of bands come through: classic rock, country, punk, new wave. Snoop Dogg actually plays there a lot because his mom lives close by.

Boo Boo Records

978 Monterey; booboo-records.com.

RD Boo Boo's was hipster before today's hipsters were born. You've got a poster of Johnny Cash flipping you off as soon as you walk in. **SBD** One of my favorite places to



Boo Boo Records

go. When I moved here from Austin, this felt like home to me. They carry all the best indie rock and have a really great selection of jazz. They've been around for maybe 40 years, and I walk in there and sometimes feel like I'm back in college. I always meet genuine, creative, down-to-earth people.

FAVORITE DINNER SPOT

Sidecar

\$\$; 1127 Broad; sidecar.slo.com.

SBD When Sidecar opened four years ago, it felt like San Luis Obispo had finally grown up. It's a classy but not stuffy restaurant that infuses its liquors in-house and

serves its cocktails in classic glassware. My drink of choice is the 144 Days: Aviation gin with fresh-squeezed lemon juice, vanilla syrup, sarsaparilla, and orange bitters. And their brussels sprouts (below) are out of this world. **RD** Yes, they're amazing. I don't get out enough, but I can testify to those. **SBD** They're flash-fried to a slight char, then drizzled with a balsamic reduction and garlic aioli, then tossed with blue cheese. They've got a little crunch to them, and then they just melt.



Call us biased, but the best way to do SLO is *Sunset's* Savor the Central Coast: four days of beach parties, chef dinners, and wine tasting. *From \$85; Sep 24-27; savorcentralcoast.com.*



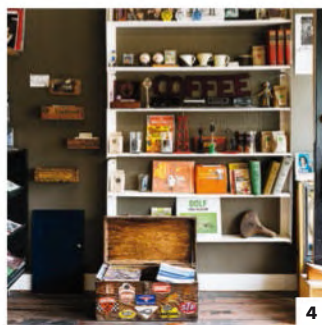
SLO country means wine country.



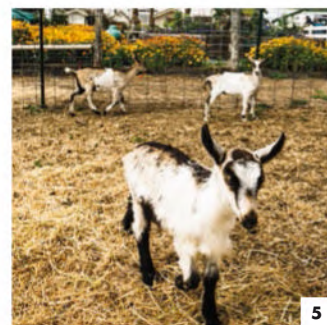
DISCOVER



2



4



5

1. Bean Hollow State Beach. 2. Glamping at Costanoa. 3. Highway 1 Brewing's fried chicken over cheddar-potato waffle. 4. Downtown Local. 5. Alpine goats wait at the gate at Harley Farms.



3

A PERFECT DAY IN

PESCADERO, CA

Indian summer in this crowd-free farm town on the San Mateo Coast comes with craft brews, secret beaches, and some of the best goat cheese in California. *By Jenna Scatena*

Carb up on the coast

Pescadero's best attractions can be found in the most unexpected places. Like **Highway 1 Brewing Company**, an unassuming alehouse that shares a lonely lot with a mom-and-pop gas station. On weekends, locals

funnel in for the rotating lineup of unorthodox beers, such as Pepper in the Rye, a rye ale with the kick of cracked peppercorns, or the seasonal Salted Caramel Porter. Either goes well with the house-fave fried chicken over cheddar-potato

waffle, best consumed at picnic tables on the laid-back patio. Got a different carb-load in mind? Ten minutes north, **Arcangeli Grocery Co./Norm's Market** churns out country-style loaves, including its famous artichoke garlic herb

bread, a yeasty bomb stuffed with artichoke hearts. Chances are you'll find it hot, or not at all, as loaves go quickly. *Highway 1 Brewing: \$; 5720 Cabrillo Hwy./State 1; highway1brewing.com. Arcangeli/Norm's: 287 Stage Rd.; normsmarket.com. —>*

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Wednesday, September 9th

Sunset
DENVER wine pairing dinner
 MIDCENTURY REMODEL
 IDEA HOUSE

Wine pairing dinner featuring ABC's "The Taste" winner Gabe Kennedy, Bravo Top Chef winner and Executive Chef/Owner of Blackbelly Hosea Rosenberg and Panzano Executive Chef Elise Wiggins at a spectacular mid-century remodel transformed from a 1954- bungalow into a three-level 5,100 square-foot modern home

Thursday, September 10th

panzano wine pairing dinner

Food & Wine pairing dinner featuring Executive Chef Rick Tramonto, James Beard winner, noted cookbook author and owner/chef at World-renowned Tru restaurant in Chicago and Restaurant R'evolution in New Orleans and Panzano Executive Chef Elise Wiggins

Friday, September 11th

art of the cocktail

- End of Summer party to feature food, cocktails, wine and entertainment
- Voting for Best Taste and Best Cocktail

Saturday, September 12th

grand tasting

- VIP & 1st Tasting Entry at Noon • GA at 1:00 p.m.
- Tastes from over 40 of Denver's top restaurants and over 700 wines and spirits
- VIP tent will feature tastes from 10-12 of Denver's finest restaurants w/wine pairing by Southern Wine & Spirits Sommeliers
- Viking Culinary Stage will feature culinary demos by Top Chef Master Rick Tramonto, ABC's "The Taste" winner Gabe Kennedy, and local celebrity chefs
- Spirits lounges and specialty food tents



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GETTING HERE

Pescadero is 46 miles south of San Francisco on Cabrillo Hwy./State 1.

Your own private beach

Push past well-known Pescadero State Beach for its often-overlooked neighbor just down the highway, **Bean Hollow State Beach**. This blink-and-you'll-miss-it cove packs a lot of fun into one small sandy space: picnic tables perched on rugged low-lying bluffs, shallow tidepools fat with anemones and urchins, a crescent strip of shoreline perfect for spotting sand dollars and driftwood. The only thing it's not good for is swimming, thanks to dangerous rip currents. Instead, burn your calories on the succulent-strewn 1.5-mile (one way) trail that curls along the coast. parks.ca.gov.

The home base you won't want to leave

Think of **Costanoa** as a drastically improved version of your childhood summer camp. Instead of musky bunk-bedded cabins, pristine white glamping

tents populate the manzanita-shaded property. A long list of day activities includes mountain biking, horseback riding, and naturalist-led hikes. And the perks don't stop when the sun goes down: S'mores-ready firepits with Adirondack chairs and heated blankets are on hand to keep you warm, and strategically placed "comfort stations" with dry saunas and hot showers abound. Want to skip the winding drive to dinner? Check out the on-site Pine Tent BBQ & Brew, serving baby back ribs and local wines through the end of October. *From \$95, restaurant \$\$\$; 2001 Rossi Rd.; costanoa.com.*

Good coffee speaks for itself

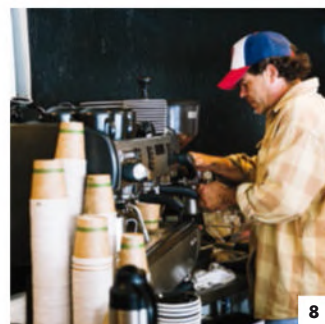
Until recently, "shopping" in Pescadero (population 643) referred to the produce you picked up at the farmstand. Then a couple of years ago, the town got a dose of urban cool with the opening of **Downtown Local**, a part curio shop, part hangout that lets customers sip Sightglass coffee while they peruse the store. A 1949 Nimbus motorcycle poses in the window in lieu of mannequins, and the shelves are jam-packed with eccentricities collected from Barcelona to Death Valley, like first-print Beatles records and groovy retro canteens. Ride out your caffeine buzz in the hidden 12-seat nano theater in the back, which plays silent films in a loop. *213 Stage; (650) 879-9155.*



6



7



8



9

6. View from the hayloft at Harley Farms. 7. Artichoke garlic herb bread from Arcangeli Grocery. 8. Downtown Local handles your morning caffeine fix. 9. Harley Farms' popular goat-cheese medallions.

Pet the goats, eat the cheese

At **Harley Farms Goat Dairy**, 200 Alpine goats graze on 29 grassy acres patrolled by llamas. It's quite a sight as you pass through the gates of the 1910 farm, but to fully appreciate it, book the tour, where you'll learn all about cheesemaking, from milking to pasteurizing to packaging. Harley's hoofed cuties

are responsible for award-winning cheeses like the fresh chèvre medallions and earthy fromage blanc. Find selections alongside goat's-milk lotions and soaps in the farm store. Monthly five-course dinners take place in the rustic-chic hayloft overlooking the garden as the sun sets over the hills. *Tour from \$20, dinner from \$150 (reservations for 2016 open Nov 1); 205 North St.; harleyfarms.com.*

BY THE NUMBERS

8

Varietals of edible flowers grown at Harley Farms to decorate its goat cheese.



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BATMANIA!

WANDERLUST

They're eerie, possibly imperiled, and utterly amazing. And New Mexico's Carlsbad Caverns is the best place in the world to see them. *By Matthew Jaffe*

THE BATS ARE NOT COOPERATING. A half-mile inside Carlsbad Caverns, hundreds of thousands of Brazilian free-tailed bats are taking their time before emerging for a night of gorging on insects across the Pecos River Valley.

"Okay, bats, what are you going to do tonight?" asks Pam Cox, chief interpretive ranger at Carlsbad Caverns National Park. She is getting nervous as our vigil nears the two-hour mark. We're staked out at the park's Bat Flight Amphitheater, a terraced set of stone benches that looks down toward the proscenium-like opening of the caverns. It is to bat flight what the Hollywood Bowl is to summer concerts.

The night before, the bats emerged around 7:30. But as the clock moves toward 8, Cox explains that it's impossible to predict the time of departure. There's no single cue that the bats respond to, neither changes in barometric pressure nor the dimming of the day, which is undetectable in the complete darkness of the bats' subterranean sanctuary. Cox has sometimes noticed the cascading call of a canyon wren just before the bats take flight but has no idea whether there's any connection. Some nights, the bats may not come out at all.

Cox is a self-confessed "bat geek," having first cultivated her obsession with these creatures during 14 years working at Phantom Ranch along the Colorado River, deep inside Grand Canyon National Park. It began the day when researchers came down the Colorado to net bats and caught a pregnant pallid bat. "They let me feel her little tummy," Cox coos. "And just looking at that face! Even though pallid bats are all like, '*Aaarrgh!!!*'"

At that point, Cox's easy smile briefly contorts into a horrific snarl to approximate the demeanor of these big-eared, badass bats (they feed on scorpions) before her face relaxes and she continues. "Yeah, they're actually really nasty little bats. But it was so neat to see a bat close up. I just fell in love with them. Now—I really am such a geek—I keep a jar of bat guano in my office."

Most people assume that all bats are nasty little bats. These creatures of the dark occupy a phobic niche deep

in the human psyche along with sharks, spiders, and snakes. Nor is it surprising why. Bats are the only mammals capable of sustained flight. They superficially resemble rodents with wings, so the "flying rats" sobriquet, while inaccurate biologically, has stuck. And yes, three vampire bat species live off blood. So for a broad segment of humanity, the idea of a half-million bats taking flight is less primal spectacle than nightmare on the wing.

But bats are both diverse and misunderstood. "We really know so little about them," says Micaela Jemison of the advocacy organization Bat Conservation International. "Trying to study a flying animal is hard enough. Studying an animal that flies at night and often in large numbers is a whole other challenge."





WHAT WE DO KNOW is that there are 1,331 kinds of bats that constitute roughly 24 percent of all mammal species. They're highly adaptive creatures, living everywhere in the world except at the poles and on remote islands. Tied for second behind Texas, both New Mexico and Arizona have 28 species.

Bottom line: There are a whole lot of bats. But the only one I've seen so far today was a mummified little guy deep inside the caverns, hanging onto a ledge with what turned out to be his death grip.

Although 16 other kinds of bats live in the park, Brazilian (also known as Mexican) free-taileds are the species synonymous with Carlsbad Caverns. They're even central to the legend of the caverns' 1898 discovery.

Earlier in the day, I had taken the park's Lower Cavern Tour, an exploration beyond developed areas and into sections of the 30-mile system accessible by ladder, rope, and a bit of wriggling and crawling through passages. At one point, the ranger shined a light on a formation to reveal the inscription: "J White, 1898."

In 1898, James Larkin White was a 16-year-old cowboy riding through New Mexico's Chihuahuan Desert

**Light floods
the caverns'
Natural
Entrance.**

when he noticed something he couldn't comprehend. White later wrote, "During my life on the range I'd seen plenty of prairie whirlwinds—but, this thing didn't move; it remained in one spot, spinning its way upward...I worked my way through the rocks and brush until I found myself gazing into the biggest and blackest hole I had ever seen, out of which the bats seemed literally to boil." White surmised that all those bats probably needed a mighty big cave and soon began his descents into Carlsbad Caverns.

THERE ARE LARGER CAVE SYSTEMS in the world than Carlsbad and caves with more bats too. Bracken Cave near San Antonio has 20 million of the animals, and what may be a million bats coming out of a roost in Mexico outside El Paso, Texas, routinely shows up on National Weather Service satellite images as cloud cover.

Bat scientist Nickolay Hristov, design researcher with the Center for Design Innovation and an assistant professor of biological sciences at Winston-Salem State University, says what distinguishes Carlsbad Caverns from other bat caves is its depth, length, and complexity.

"Carlsbad Caverns is like nothing else," he says. "It's enormous, and the sheer size means that there's a huge area between the formal end of the roost and where the natural entrance is. The bats have to traverse a really long corridor, and you're surrounded by the darkness as they fly in and out. You can be an observer of their movement within the cave."

Hristov grew up in southern Bulgaria's Rhodope Mountains, the son of geologists who he said "introduced me to the world outside of concrete and asphalt." He found twin passions: biology and photography. After coming to the United States to study zoology at The University of Maine, a research opportunity fell through and Hristov found himself working a job in the campus cafeteria. He then noticed a sign for a bat project at nearby Acadia National Park. "I didn't have strong feelings one way or another about bats," he says. "Bats are tiny, they live in the dark, and they're close to impossible to photograph. But it was a moment of desperation. And I didn't want to do dishes."

The bat roost is a remarkably harsh place in which to work for Hristov and the teams of students and collaborators (including wife and fellow bat researcher Louise Allen), who have to haul in and operate a half-million dollars of scientific instrumentation. "By almost all physiological standards, it's hostile and miserable," he says. "Incredibly disgusting yet utterly fascinating."

There's ammonia and carbon dioxide, poop and pee, and lots of decomposition, he says. Weird insects and parasites crawl up researchers' legs from the 33-yard-deep layer of guano. Pam Cox, enthralled by the utter weirdness of the bat cave during a visit, recalls walking



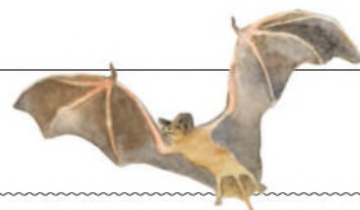
around while looking through an infrared camera. "I'm recording and thinking, So cool, so cool. Then I tripped and went face down into the guano. It's all on video and the camera gets buried. But it's amazing in there."

Hristov's work has helped reveal the bats' world. Using thermal imaging cameras, he created videos that show the bat roost as a place not of silent, slumbering bats but of constant activity. He created a fly-through, 3-D reconstruction of the caverns, and in another video, the bats, illuminated as heat signatures, race through the void, glowing like thousands of mini comets. A video shot at 1,000 frames per second captures the animals flying out through the cavern opening, every flap of their wings visible in a way the thousands of visitors who come to the Bat Flight Amphitheater every summer could hardly imagine.

For Hristov and Cox, these images and ongoing research present a unique opportunity to educate the public about bats. Often, Cox says, interpretive rangers don't know about the latest studies that scientists are conducting in parks. Carlsbad Caverns National Park is the first location of a pilot program started by Hristov, Allen, and Martha Merson called iSWOOP (Interpreters and Scientists Working on Our Parks), which is designed to bridge the gap between visitors and scientists.

Although Hristov believes there's been a shift in attitudes and a greater acceptance of bats over the past 10 to 15 years, age-old misconceptions endure. Bat Conservation International reports that habitat loss remains a huge problem and colonies are routinely destroyed, even though bats play a key role in controlling insect populations. Cox says the Brazilian free-tailed bats, for example, can eat up to half their body weight each night, with a special fondness for corn-ear worm moths, an agricultural pest whose larvae destroy crops. That's tons of bugs every night.

Nor are they the only beneficial bats. Fruit-eating bats promote the regeneration of forests by spreading seeds over long distances. And if you like margaritas, be sure to raise a toast to long-nosed bats. They're a primary pollinator of century plants,



SEEING THE BATS

GETTING THERE

Carlsbad Caverns National Park is 300 miles southeast of Albuquerque and 150 miles northeast of El Paso. The closest lodging and dining is in White's City, 7 miles from the visitor center. \$10; nps.gov/cave.

BAT VIEWING

Every night from Memorial Day through late October, the park's Bat Flight Program takes place in the

outdoor amphitheater, where rangers give talks on bat flight, reproduction, and echolocation. The schedule varies depending on time of sunset; check ahead. nps.gov/cave.

OTHER OUTINGS

The ranger-led Lower Cave Tour (\$20) is a three-hour adventure that leads into sections of the caverns away from crowds and requires descents using a rope and

several ladders. Reserve at (877) 444-6777 or recreation.gov.

For a better sense of the opening from which the bats emerge, hike into the caverns on the 1.25-mile Natural Entrance Self-Guided Tour, which descends 750 feet.

DIGITAL BONUS More places to watch wildlife around the West: sunset.com/wildlife.

Waiting for the show at Bat Flight Amphitheater.

the agave from which tequila is made. No bats, no agaves. No agaves, no tequila.

"Bats are some of the most unique animals in the world," says Micaela Jemison. "There are bats that hunt fish and bats that can eat spiders out of a web without breaking it. Bats have made the most out of virtually all of the environments on Earth. To lose bats, we would lose a vital part of so many different ecosystems."

Here at Carlsbad, park visitors learn about a threat to North America's bat populations. When I checked in for the cavern tour, the ranger asked whether I had visited any other caves over the past couple of years. White-nose syndrome has ravaged bat populations in at least 26 states and Canada, killing entire colonies in some cases. Discovered in 2006, the fungus is spread bat-to-bat in hibernating populations and by humans moving between caves. Bats awaken more frequently, which uses up precious fat reserves, and the disease sometimes causes the animals to emerge prematurely during winter, leading to death by starvation or cold.

In May, the fungus was found in Oklahoma, its western-most extent to date. So far, Carlsbad Caverns has been spared. But the park is taking no chances: Clothing and shoes known to have been in areas with white-nose syndrome are not permitted without proper cleaning.

LIKE ANY HEADLINER, the bats have an opening act, and Cox and I watch cave swallows swoop around the cavern opening, nabbing bugs out of the air. Cox says the swallows, seeming to anticipate the bats' exit, often stop flying and go quiet not long before the emergence. So we wait, hoping to detect changes in the swallows' behavior and any signs of bats emerging from their underground lair.

The caverns are a contradictory place. Caustic sulfuric acid first carved out the chambers. Then water, a drop at a time, began to craft the stalactites, stalagmites, and drapery-like formations, creating a gothic grandeur that belies just how alien this environment hundreds of feet deep in the earth truly is. In the darkness, there are zombie crickets controlled by parasitic worms. And when bat pups fall from the ceiling, beetles swarm from the guano and eat them to the bone.

"Mommy and Me" this isn't: After the bats give birth to a single pup, the babies remain clustered in a section of the roost separate from their moms, packed in at more than 400 animals per square foot. But by using scent and sound, the mother bats are able to locate their pups for feedings. The rock seems alive, says Hristov. "It's almost like there's a super-organism above you."

Finally I catch some movement near the cavern opening. There's no sudden burst out of the cave. Instead, bats begin to rise from the opening in a tight spiral. Hristov had explained that Carlsbad is like a large crater, and while bats are skilled long-distance flyers, covering 50 miles in a night and able to reach speeds up to 60 mph with a good tailwind, their long skinny wings also mean that they can't fly straight up. Gaining elevation burns up a lot of energy.

Soon more and more animals swirl from the opening. Bats are everywhere, filling the air above our heads with no discernible pattern to their flight. It's all strangely silent. Their vocalizations are at a register beyond our ability to hear, so the only noise is thousands of flapping wings that together sound like a soft rain on a summer night. Their moving bodies and translucent wings create a living scrim that filters the remaining sunlight. The bats are also near enough that we smell them, a surprising sweetness mingling in their earthy scent.

Cox and I say nothing as the bats surge from the cavern, a few flying so close that we feel the rush of beating wings. Occasionally I try to follow a single bat, which is possible, at least briefly, before it's absorbed by the multitudes as the animals organize themselves into what look like dark streams flowing into the sunset sky.

It takes 40 minutes before the last bats leave the cave for the New Mexico night. I'll be back before dawn for their return. 🦇

ALL ROADS LEAD TO SAVOR

• SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY •

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Cavallo Point, Sausalito, CA

Brigit Binns, author of *Eating Up the West Coast*

Sebastian's General Store, San Simeon

230 MILES

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SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY**

Before heading south, spend an afternoon exploring the Sonoma County wine country, then dine at **Spoonbar** in Healdsburg, where rising chef Louis Maldonado's contemporary American cuisine is both inventive and approachable. Across from San Francisco in Sausalito, award-winning author and PBS cooking series host Joanne Weir's


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Copita Tequileria y Comida has earned national acclaim for its seasonal and modern Mexican dining.

If you're looking to pick up snacks for the trip, stop at San Francisco's **Ferry Building Marketplace** for everything from organic produce to artisan chocolates, then rev up with a single-origin espresso at **Blue Bottle Coffee**. Drive the coast to Half Moon Bay's waterfront **Sam's Chowder House** for a lobster roll that *The Today Show* named one of America's five best sandwiches. In a breakfast mood? **LouLou's Griddle in the Middle** on Monterey's waterfront cooks up irresistible chocolate-chip griddle cakes and local specialties, including calamari steak with eggs.

A short hop off Highway 1, Carmel-by-the-Sea may be better known for art galleries but with numerous tasting rooms, it's the perfect place to discover Monterey County wines. Continue 30 miles south on Highway 1 to **Nepenthe Restaurant**,

a definitive Big Sur experience thanks to sweeping coastal views and famous ambrosia burgers.

Celebrated in Brigit Binns' *Eating Up the West Coast* and easily reached from Hearst Castle, the **Sebastian General Store** dates to 1852 and serves tri-tip and burgers made with grass-fed Hearst Ranch beef, plus the ranch's wines in the tasting room. Little more than a shack by the beach, **Ruddell's Smokehouse** in Cayucos uses delectably smoked salmon and albacore in its fish tacos.

Chef Joanne Weir of
Copita Tequileria y Comida
Sausalito, CA



330 MILES

SAN DIEGO TO SAN LUIS
OBISPO COUNTY

Juniper & Ivy's beautifully renovated warehouse near San Diego's Little Italy is the perfect setting for Top Chef All-Stars winner Richard Blais' "refined American food with a Left Coast edge." **Stone Brewing Co.** raised San Diego into the top rank of beer cities and serves creative gastropub fare at bistros in Escondido and Liberty Station near San Diego Bay.

Across from Huntington Beach's legendary waves, hang with surfers and dig into charbroiled burgers on plush egg buns at **TK Burgers**. Nearly 100 years old, **Grand Central Market** is downtown Los Angeles' hippest food destination thanks to a new wave of gourmet purveyors, including **DTLA Cheese**.

In 1985, chefs Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger set off on a driving quest to learn about Mexico's cooking traditions. It worked: The dining at their vibrant **Border Grill** restaurants in downtown L.A. and Santa Monica is both refined and unmistakably authentic. Nearby in Santa Monica at **FIG Restaurant**, Yousef Ghalaini works wonders with California's seasonal bounty in his Mediterranean-inspired cuisine.

Up coast in Santa Barbara, James Siao sources from Central Coast farms, ranches, and fishermen to create modern takes on American classics at **Finch & Fork**, where the signature cocktails are as tasty as the food. For libations of a different kind, sample varietals from boutique Central Coast wineries at Santa Barbara County's **Los Olivos Tasting Room**. The Central Coast is also Santa Maria-style barbecue country, and nothing beats a ribeye cooked over red oak at Nipomo's landmark **Jocko's Steakhouse** located just off the California Highway 1 Discovery Route.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: AMANDA FRIEDMAN, DAVE LAURIDSEN PHOTOGRAPHY, FIG RESTAURANT SANTA MONICA



Grand Central Market, Los Angeles



The Spencer steak at Jocko's Steak House, Nipomo, CA

FIG RESTAURANT

Chef Yousef Ghalaini of FIG
Santa Monica, CA



FLAVORS OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Gorgeous ocean views pair with executive chef Jacob Moss' distinctive farm-to-table menu (try the cornmeal-dusted wild salmon) at Pismo Beach's **Lido at Dolphin Bay**. Chef Ben Richardson sources locally and cooks globally at downtown San Luis Obispo's **Novo Restaurant and Lounge**, where you can dine creekside on dishes inspired by eclectic world cuisines. A veteran of Napa Valley's celebrated étoile, Christopher Manning of **Thomas Hill Organics** in Paso Robles finds an ideal balance between classic French and avant garde approaches in his unforgettable regional cooking.

ALL ROADS LEAD TO SAVOR

• SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY •



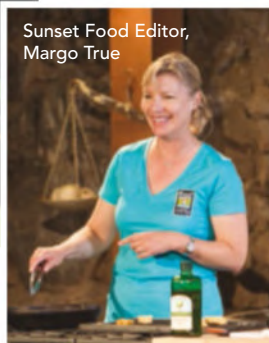
Celebrity chef,
Mary Sue Milliken
of Border Grill

MEET US AT
SUNSET SAVOR THE
CENTRAL COAST

SEPT. 24-27,
2015



Sunset Wine Editor,
Sara Schneider



Sunset Food Editor,
Margo True



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THE CENTRAL COAST

Main Event at the historic SANTA MARGARITA RANCH

Hit the road with Sunset editors as your guides through the ultimate epicurean adventure in San Luis Obispo County during the 6th Annual Sunset SAVOR the Central Coast! With endless possibilities for food, wine and culinary adventures, we've assembled our top picks on how to get the most out of SAVOR and the iconic California Central Coast this September.



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

Cruise up the CA Highway 1 Discovery Route for an adventure in Cambria with Sunset Wine Editor Sara Schneider and Ralph Covell, owner of the stunning Covell Ranch, for a guided tour of the property that is home to over 100 impressive Clydesdales, and finish with a deluxe picnic lunch paired with local wines. Next, head east on route 46 to check in at Paso Robles Inn to prepare for SAVOR's new opening night, *Strings at Sunset*. An evening of sensory overload awaits you just down the road as Vina Robles Amphitheatre transforms into an extravaganza of endless tastings of Sunset International Wine Competition Winners, celebrity chef tasting stations including Mary Sue Milliken, and music and theatrical performances by String Theory and Spags!

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Make your way to Bristols Cider House in Atascadero for a tour of the facilities and their pressing process complete with a cider-paired lunch, or, take to the sea in Avila Beach with Sunset's Food Editor Margo True. Take time for a walking tour of downtown San Luis Obispo before you head back to Paso Robles for your choice of dining experiences at JUSTIN Vineyards & Winery, Paso Robles Inn or hilltop at Adelaida Cellars.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

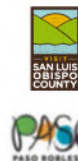
The Main Event opens at the Historic Santa Margarita Ranch. Head over to the Volvo Ride & Drive experience then to the Marketplace where 100+ wineries, restaurants and food purveyors will be sampling their delicious food and drink. Meet us at the Central Coast Pavilion to learn more about the unique facets of the region before visiting Winemaker Central for tasting seminars with leading wine-makers and Sunset's Sara Schneider.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

#FundaySunday. Start day two of the Main Event with Margo True at Dignity Health's Chef Central with celebrity and master chefs Mary Sue Milliken, Louis Maldonado, Joanne Weir, Yousef Ghalaini, James Siao, Brigit Binns and more! Just around the corner at the CA Grown Pavilion and Demonstration Stage, learn how to transform California's freshest, most flavorful ingredients into delicious masterpieces. Time to unwind with live music and cold, locally brewed beer in the Estrada Garden before wrapping up your SAVOR weekend experience. Spend your last evening in Pismo Beach at one of the many great lodging options including waterfront properties where you'll have convenient access to the beach and downtown, before catching sunset from the pier.

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Home & Garden

EASY
STYLE

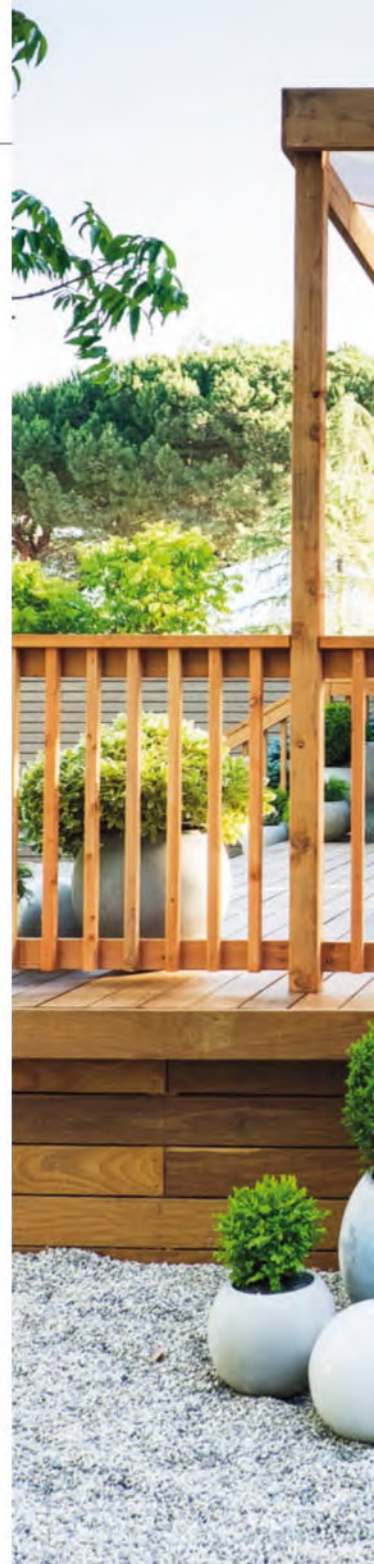
THE NEW BACKYARD

*A serene, low-water garden and
a multi-use cottage share one
hardworking space.*

*Extreme
makeover*

THIS YARD IS ACTUALLY
A FORMER PARKING LOT
AT SUNSET!

A backyard cottage has a high squeal factor, but that's not the only reason to build one. For an installation at *Sunset's* 18th annual Celebration Weekend in June, we remodeled a small structure, the kind of place that homeowners all over the West are using as guest cottages or rentals (think extra income and grass-roots housing relief). Around it, we designed a low-water yard where calm reigns—and the lawn isn't missed.



THE GARDEN

A love of order and tranquility inspired this low-water yard, designed by *Sunset* garden editors Johanna Silver and Lauren Dunec Hoang in collaboration with landscape designer Josh Heiser (above left, left to right). It features three destinations—lounge, small dining area, and “looking garden” of mass-planted beds—united by green and silver foliage. Their tips and tricks for getting the look:



EASY STYLE



Put form first

For uniformity, most plants are globular. Foliage trumps flowers, especially in the square beds, page 33, of 'Cousin Itt' acacia and *Pittosporum tobira* 'Cream de Mint'. Agaves and fescue add structure.

Set up a spot for outdoor living

The area in front of the ipe-wood deck, above, is the lounge—a place to gather under the shade of the Chinese pistache trees that delineate the spot from the rest of the garden. Awning fabric, Sunbrella.

Borrow from Asian design

The feng shui craze may be over, but the ideas are still useful, like placing a wall behind the daybed in the lounge, opposite top left. The psychological trick makes the spot more comfortable and inviting.

Create order, then mess it up a little

The soldier-straight beds lined with pavers, page 33, recall classic formal English gardens. The spherical pots and concrete orbs offset that sameness. *Pavers, Belgard Hardscapes.*

Leave empty space

"The obvious missing feature in this garden is the lawn," says Hoang. Instead, permeable gravel gives an expanse of a single color. The effect is clean and highlights the plants.

Pick a color and don't stray

The designers chose plants with a tight palette in mind: green with touches of silver and blue. "It creates a very calming space to be surrounded by green and smooth surfaces," Hoang says.

3 TOP LOW-WATER PLANTS

These plants quickly became our designers' favorites for their interesting shapes and drought-tolerant quality. All three are grown by Monrovia.



'Cousin Itt' acacia
(*A. cognata*). You wouldn't expect this shaggy, lush species to be a dry plant—but it is. It grows into compact mounds 2 to 3 feet tall and 3 feet wide.



Pearl bluebush
(*Maireana sedifolia*). Silver succulent foliage that's shaped like a conifer—it's an otherworldly combination that instantly reads as special.



'Elijah Blue' fescue
(*Festuca glauca*). This staple of Mediterranean gardens becomes a star when planted in clumps. Put it where the sun will make each spiky mound glow.



Change the yard's shape

A curved cedarwood fence, left, softens the garden's 90° angles, creates a more intimate corner, and hides storage space on the other side. "To break up the expanse of fencing, we planted a lush bed in front," says Silver.

Curate a collection

A display case made from fruit crates and pipes, above, reflects the garden's themes in miniature: Bonsai and kokedama nod to the Japanese influence, while the small spheres add modernity.

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THE COTTAGE

Inspired by golden California hills and midcentury style, designer Orlando Soria, West Coast creative director for Homepolish, turned this 400-square-foot space by New Avenue Homes into a gem.



Work the walls

Before our update, the cottage's kitchen didn't have shelving. Soria installed walnut open shelves above the counter and across the loft to gain storage and display space.

Choose shape over color

"I like the idea of using really interesting shapes but in white, so your eye is more interested in the form than the color," Soria says. The Fireclay Tile he used in the kitchen, for example, has a subtle geometric pattern.

Pick a showstopper

Because the den is visible from every part of the cottage, Soria played it up as a focal point, with a daring gold-and-white wallpaper from Juju Papers. "Having that loud pattern helps you see how bright the rest of the space is," he says.

Bring in vintage

Influenced by Sunset's campus, built in

1951, Soria gave the cottage some history, with midcentury furniture from the De Angelis showroom in San Francisco. He also mixed Japanese-inspired ceramics from his mom's collection with new pieces by ceramist Ben Medansky. "Vintage helps bring gravitas," he says.

Try glass

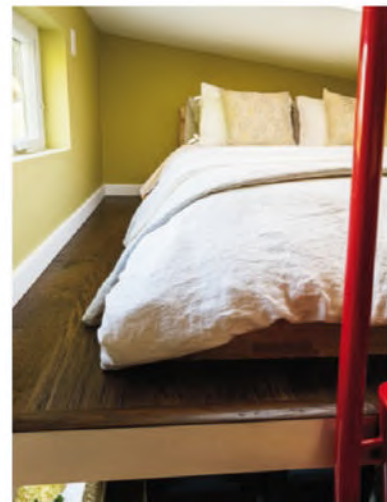
Despite the kitchen's streamlined compactness, Soria used a full-size dining table. "We got away with a table that was slightly too large because it was glass," he says. "It doesn't take up a lot of visual space." Plus, it reveals more of the graphic rug from Rugs USA.

Rethink neutrals

Gold became Soria's neutral. "It can be combined with so many colors." To keep spaces interesting, he says it's important to vary the materials, pointing to the brass on the legs of the glass table compared with the other walls in the sleeping loft.

Just add pink

With a sunset over California's hills as inspiration, he hung works in pink by artists Erika Gragg and Anna Ullman. It helps the cottage feel young despite its vintage elements.





OUR COTTAGE is an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU), meaning it has a full kitchen and a bathroom, which makes getting permits tricky. New Avenue Homes, based in Emeryville, California, is a software platform that helps homeowners, architects, and contractors navigate the permitting process—along with entire construction projects, from ADUs to conventional new-home construction. newavenuehomes.com.

DESIGN FOR REAL-WORLD BUDGETS Professional interior design is a luxury service not everyone can afford. Homepolish offers a solution: Buy time with an interior designer for a simple hourly fee of \$100 to \$130. They come to your place, design it, and even pass their trade discounts on furniture and accessories on to you. homepolish.com. ▲

DIGITAL BONUS See more photos of this cottage and garden: sunset.com/cottagegarden.

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Belgard Hardscapes, belgard.com.

GMC, gmc.com.

New Avenue Homes, newavenuehomes.com.

Sunbrella, sunbrella.com.



BUILD AND DESIGN TEAM

Josh Heiser, O'donnell.lane, odonnell-lane.com;
Orlando Soria, Homepolish, homepolish.com.

SHOPPING GUIDE

GARDEN

Bonsai Bonsai Gardens at Lake Merritt, gsbf-lakemerritt.org.

Containers Potted, potted store.com; Pottery Merchant, (510) 235-9900.

Cushions and awning fabric Sunbrella, sunbrella.com.

Cushions and awning manufacturing In Stitches Design Solutions, (408) 334-2819.

Deck design and installation Friendly Fences Decks, friendlyfencesanddecks.com.

Furniture Bend Goods, bendgoods.com; Boxhill, shopboxhill.com.

Garden design Lauren Dunec Hoang and Johanna Silver, sunset.com; Josh Heiser, O'donnell.lane, odonnell-lane.com.

Garden installation C. Ramos Landscaping, (831) 809-2693.

Kokedama The Sill, thesill.com.

Landscape materials Lyngsø Garden Materials, lyngso.garden.com.

Lumber (fence and deck) Golden State Lumber, goldenstatelumber.com.

Plant material Monrovia, monrovia.com; Sunset Western Garden Collection, sunsetwesterngardencollection.com; Tree Movers, treemovers.com.

Steel planters Steel Geisha Designs, steelgeishadesigns.com.

COTTAGE

Abstract artwork Anna Ullman, annaulman.com.

Accent pillows Barn & Willow, barnandwillow.com.

Appliances Asien's Appliance, asiensappliance.com.

Bed LAX Series, laxseries.com.

Bedding Coyuchi, coyuchi.com.

Boat sculpture Ann Mendershausen.

Countertop manufacturing and installation

United Marble & Granite, umgslabs.com.

Countertops MS International, msistone.com.

Door and window installation Pak's Builder Company, paksbuilder.co.com.

Doors and windows Andersen Windows, andersenwindows.com.

Floor installation Slaughterbeck Floors, slaughterbeckfloors.com.

Floors and rugs Independence Hardwood; Rugs USA, rugsusa.com; Rugworks (Sonoma), rugworks.com.

Floral artwork Erika Lawrence Gragg, egragg.bigcartel.com.

Furniture and accessories De Angelis, 1stdibs.com/dealers/deangelis.

Kitchen cabinets Justin Long Custom Cabinets & Furniture, justinlongcabinets.com.

Linens Coyuchi, coyuchi.com.

Mattress Casper, casper.com.

Painting Simpson Company Painting Contractors, simpsonpainting.com.

Plumbing fixtures and trim Plumbed Elegance, plumbedelegance.com.

Plumbing installation Valley of the Moon Plumbing, (707) 800-2043.

Pottery and accessories Ben Medansky Ceramics, benmedansky.com.

Tile Fireclay Tile, fireclaytile.com.
Tile installation Wishart Tile Co., wishart-tile.com.

Wallpaper Juju Papers, jujupapers.com.

Wallpaper installation Steven L. Shlee, wallcoveringinstaller.ca.com.

Produced by Josh Heiser

In the Western HOME

THIS IS SMART SAFETY UPGRADE

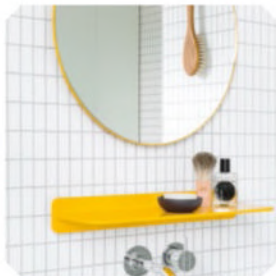
More than half of household falls happen in the bathroom, so products that make this room safer for everyone are a win. But usually they're ugly. Enter Sabi by Urbio of Oakland, whose new line is practical and attractive. Here are our three favorites. myurbio.com.



➤ **HOLD** It's like a grab bar, only better since it's accessible from all angles. \$100.



➤ **HOOP** A silicon ring keeps towels in place so they don't fall and cause slips. \$40.



➤ **SHELF** The floating design allows easy access to items; rounded edges make it extra safe. From \$55.



IDEA WE LOVE

Nature-inspired dreams

Nothing keeps a room fresh like a little greenery. For San Diego-based stylist and photographer Amber Thrane (dulcetcreative.com), this means arranging clippings from her garden in hanging vases above her bed. She alternates the foliage with air plants and succulents according to the season. "I wanted the serenity you feel when you fall into a resort's all-white bed combined with the tranquility of nature," says Thrane. Aster, heuchera, and Japanese maple are all good options this month. *Hanging wall vases from \$2.95; cb2.com.*

LIVING IN DROUGHT

Tips for renters

It's hard to feel like a water-saving hero when you're a somewhat powerless renter. We asked Jared Blumenfeld, a regional administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, how renters can do their part.

MAKE EASY SWAPS

It's relatively cheap to switch out conventional showerheads and faucets for low-flow alternatives. (Save originals in case your landlord wants them when you leave.)

HARVEST WATER

If there are damp areas of your home, get a dehumidifier to collect water. Blumenfeld gets about 70 pints a day from one in his basement, which he uses to water the yard.

ADJUST YOUR HABITS

Never leave a faucet running. When brushing teeth or washing hands, have the faucet flowing only when you rinse.

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH | MIX MASTER

Choosing a throw pillow is tricky because it's not just about the pillow but about how it works with the other textiles in the room. Enter Bay Area company The Guildery (guildery.com): It does the work of coordinating colors and patterns for you by organizing fabrics into collections. The fabrics are designed by interior designers and artists like Sarah & Ruby Design Studio from San Francisco, whose Sefrou collection (including the ottoman at right, \$496) is a favorite of ours. Click into a collection, then mix pillow, ottoman, and drape options without fear—everything, and anything, goes. 🛋️



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Vegetable gardens to fall for

Get a cool-season plot that delivers on beauty and bounty.

By Johanna Silver

TEST GARDEN TIPS

AS MUCH AS WE LOVE ripe tomatoes, by midsummer, we're already fantasizing about our fall vegetable garden. While rangy tomato vines and dead cornstalks make their way to the compost pile this time of year, we replant our Test Garden beds with the prettiest edibles: structural Swiss chard, voluptuous cabbage plants, and vining snap peas. By getting the garden established in the still-warm fall days and watered by rainfall, a cool-season garden looks good from autumn through spring. Turn the page for tips from our vegetable plots, from design advice to the best vegetables to plant right now.

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— J. Fitzgerald, VA

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We've all had nights when we just can't lie down in bed and sleep, whether it's from heartburn, cardiac problems, hip or back aches — it could be a variety of reasons. Those are the nights we'd give anything for a comfortable chair to sleep in, one that reclines to exactly the right degree, raises feet and legs to precisely the desired level, supports the head and shoulders properly, operates easily even in the dead of night, and sends a hopeful sleeper right off to dreamland.

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and relaxation not found in other chairs. It can't be beat for comfortable, long-term sitting, TV viewing, relaxed reclining and — yes! — peaceful sleep. Our chair's recline technology allows you to pause the chair in an infinite number of positions, including the Trendelenburg position and the zero gravity position where your body experiences a minimum of internal and external stresses. You'll love the other benefits, too: It helps with correct spinal alignment, promotes back

pressure relief, and encourages better posture to prevent back and muscle pain.

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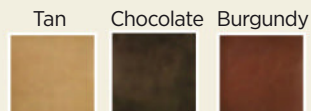
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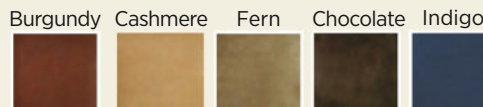


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CHOOSE A LAYOUT

A keyhole design makes the most of a smaller yard because it gives over minimal real estate to pathways. In a larger yard, simple rows have graphic impact (think of striped farmland). Either way, make beds no wider than 4 feet for easy maintenance and harvest; keep soil loose and healthy by walking on pathways only.

Keyhole

In this Test Garden plot, we created symmetrical plantings for a flow of colors and textures. The beds measure 2½ feet wide and 9 feet long, connecting at one end.

1. Collard 'Top Bunch'
2. Mustard 'Southern Giant'
3. Collard 'Georgia'
4. Brokali (broccoli/kale hybrid)
5. Swiss chard 'Bright Lights'
6. Mustard 'Red Giant'
7. Cabbage 'Stonehead'
8. Mustard 'Southern Giant'
9. Cabbage 'Red Jewel'
10. Frisée
11. Viola 'Sorbet Coconut Swirl'

Rows

In an area measuring 15 by 18 feet, we kept beds graphic by planting bands of a single vegetable variety, then created a backdrop with tall vining crops. The four rows are 7 feet long, of varying widths.

1. Cabbage 'Red Jewel'
2. Cabbage 'Stonehead'
3. Mustard 'Southern Giant'
4. Swiss chard 'Bright Lights'
5. Sugar snap peas 'Super Sugar'
6. Siberian garlic
7. Garlic 'Early Italian Red'
8. Elephant garlic
9. Italian parsley
10. Mustard 'Red Giant'
11. Cutting celery
12. Arugula
13. Chives
14. Frisée
15. Carrot 'Rainbow Sun'



PLAY WITH DESIGN



1

Plant for contrast

Place different shapes and colors next to one another. Here, frilly green leaves of chartreuse mustard pop against purple cabbage.



2

Mix in flowers

Include an edge of violas for cheer; the edible blossoms can dress up winter salads too.



3

Use support

Create a simple A-frame trellis out of bamboo and wire to support vining snap peas—and add a lush backdrop to beds.



4

Keep it bountiful

Plant crops that produce all season, like kale and chard. They maintain garden structure as you pull out single-harvest ones, like cabbage.

PLANT FOR VARIETY

Naturally, it makes sense to grow what you know you'll eat, but the joy of gardening (and cooking) is in experimentation too. Here are our top picks for fall, including new favorites and the tried-and-true.

New standouts

Cutting celery (right) This leafy herb is more about intense flavor than crisp stalks. Keep it on hand for adding to soup stock. johnnyseeds.com.

Carrot 'Purple Sun' This 2015 introduction offers dark purple carrots that are extra crisp and sweet. reneesgarden.com.

Brokoli 'Apollo' This broccoli/kale hybrid produces small broccoli heads and side shoots that keep growing large, tender leaves. burpee.com.



Classic standbys

Mustard 'Green Wave' (left) Bright green leaves practically glow in a fall garden. The hot flavor mellows when cooked, and this variety is slow to bolt. johnnyseeds.com.

Kale 'Lacinato' This dark green Italian variety is great raw (when leaves are small), sautéed, added to soups, or baked into chips. parkseed.com.

Cabbage 'Flat Dutch' This heirloom napa cabbage type produces large heads that store well. rareseeds.com.

PICK YOUR MOMENT

Harvest the outer leaves of leafy crops (including collard and mustard greens and Swiss chard) frequently to keep new leaves growing until frost.



Cabbage heads are ready for harvest when they're fully firm but not rock hard. Using a sharp knife, slice off the head at the base. 



NORTHERN
CALIFORNIA

Your CHECKLIST



"Granite's heavy stature and coarse texture add a feeling of stateliness to a garden."

JOHANNA SILVER,
SENIOR GARDEN EDITOR

**SAVE WATER**

As nights grow cooler, reduce your watering frequency, especially if you're using an automatic watering system.

**PREP**

Shop nurseries now for the best selection of spring bulbs, including crocuses, daffodils, freesias, hyacinths, and tulips. Choose firm bulbs without soft spots. Chill hyacinths and tulips in the refrigerator for about six weeks, away from ripening fruit.

**PLANT**

Set out seedlings of cool-season vegetables such as broccoli, collards, kale, kohlrabi, leeks, and Swiss chard.

Plant California wild lilac (*Ceanothus*) in unamended soil in full sun, allowing plenty of room for it to spread. In hot inland areas, try C. 'Centennial'—a new low-mounding hybrid from Monrovia with deep cobalt flowers.

Soak sweet pea seeds overnight, then plant 1 inch deep and 6 inches apart. Vining varieties will require support as soon as shoots form tendrils.



IDEA WE LOVE |

Bold entry

Faced with a steep slope on either side of this front yard path in Seattle, landscape designer Scot Eckley (scoteckley.com) opted for chunky granite boulders to retain soil, then used granite slabs for steps to the front door. To soften the entry, he planted lavender at the base of the steps. Drifts of fountain grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln') billow over the boulders, while woolly thyme and *Sedum* 'Red Carpet' ramble at their bases. A clump of perennial black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) adds a hit of gold from late summer through fall.

In well-amended soil, sink garlic bulbs 2 inches deep and 3 to 6 inches apart, keeping the pointy end up. Buy seed garlic that is suited to your climate and guaranteed to be disease-free. Territorial Seed (territorialseed.com) offers a good selection of garlic, onions, and shallots.

**HARVEST**

Continue picking cucumbers, eggplants, green beans,

tomatoes, and zucchini. Once plants stop producing, pull them out and compost only those that show no signs of disease.

Taste any grapes on vines to check for sweetness before harvesting the cluster—they stop ripening once cut off the vine.

**MAINTAIN**

Deeply water fruit trees once every other week by either turning on the drip irrigation to

45 minutes or setting a garden hose within the drip line of the tree and turning it on to dribble for 45 minutes.

**GO**

Head to the fourth annual Succulent Extravaganza at Succulent Gardens in Castroville. Come early for the best selection to purchase (one to look for: giant *Dudleya*). Sep 25–26; sgplants.com. 🌵



Learn what to plant when with our year-round checklists: sunset.com/checklists.



Cook in Nature's Kitchen



THE GREAT OUTDOORS COOKBOOK has everything you need to experience the ultimate outdoor cooking adventure — whether at a campsite, on the beach, or in your backyard — with menu planning and packing tips, advice on equipment, and thoroughly tested recipes that are surprising, delicious, and fun to make.

Plus, learn from our expert live-fire cooks in our video companion course!

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Sunset



HIGHWAY 395

THE
ROAD
— TO —
GOLD

BY
ANN MARIE BROWN
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
THOMAS J.
STORY



NORTH
LAKE,
NEAR
BISHOP,
CA.



After hundreds of miles of sagebrush desert, the Eastern Sierra soars 10,000 feet all at once. Peaks truly loom.

Heads must be thrown back to take it all in. U.S. 395, California's other great highway drive, traces this vertiginous meeting of desert and mountains. From Lone Pine to Reno, every turnoff seems to shelter another wonder: The ghost town of Bodie. Mt. Whitney. The world's oldest trees. The tufa towers at Mono Lake. The 60-foot basalt columns at Devils Postpile. And, starting this month, glimmering, shimmering fall foliage that rivals anything in New England.

Pack up your car and get ready for the still-wild West.



S **DIGITAL BONUS** Hop in the car with photographer Tom Story—see his road-trip video and even more photos: sunset.com/hwy395.

ALABAMA HILLS

MILE
1

GOLD-HUNGRY MINERS KNEW THAT “the Bamas” were a good place to lose a horse. Almost anything smaller than a house could hide in this whimsical maze of rounded boulders, golden-hued arches, and badland gullies, which is why the Alabama Hills made the ideal backdrop for westerns. Pick up the *Movie Road Self-Guided Tour* booklet (\$2 donation suggested; see “Tips,” below) in Lone Pine, California, then locate the spots where Roy Rogers, John Wayne, and Hopalong Cassidy ambushed outlaws from their craggy hideouts. Drive the Movie Road to Movie Flat, where dirt roads and trails fan out

to Gene Autry Rock, Lone Ranger Canyon, and Gary Cooper Rock. Take a walk on the Arch Loop Trail to snap photos of 14,505-foot Mt. Whitney, highest peak in the contiguous United States, framed within the twisted span of Mobius Arch. Then go on a treasure hunt to find more arches nearby. It’s easy to get caught up in the magic, so pack camping gear and stay past daylight to witness starry nights. *lonepinechamber.org, blm.gov.*



TIPS

At the **Eastern Sierra Interagency Visitor Center**: maps and brochures. 640 S. Main St., Lone Pine; (760) 876-6222.

Instead of hiking Mt. Whitney, drive the view-filled Whitney Portal Road. Then stop at the **Whitney Portal Store** for mountainous pancakes or burgers. \$; *whitneyportalstore.com.*

ROADSIDE ESSENTIAL

MUSEUM OF WESTERN FILM HISTORY

Lone Pine’s shrine houses costumes, saddles, and guns used in a century’s worth of movies. Seeing Humphrey Bogart’s getaway car from *High Sierra* justifies a trip. If you linger over the posters or cowboy hats, kiss your day good-bye. \$5; 701 S. Main St.; *museumofwesternfilmhistory.org.*

MANZANAR

MILE
10

A remote high-desert site marks a wartime miscarriage as well as a community's remarkable reflowering.

BY BRUCE ANDERSON

"HARD TO BELIEVE," Norman said. We were exploring Mess Hall 14 at Manzanar National Historic Site, 9 miles north of Lone Pine and hard by the shadow of 14,375-foot Mt. Williamson. Wood and tar paper were the only things between us and the slight afternoon chill.

"What's that?" I asked. The tar-paper walls? Massive oil-burning stove? Trampling of the Constitution?

"The logistics," he replied.

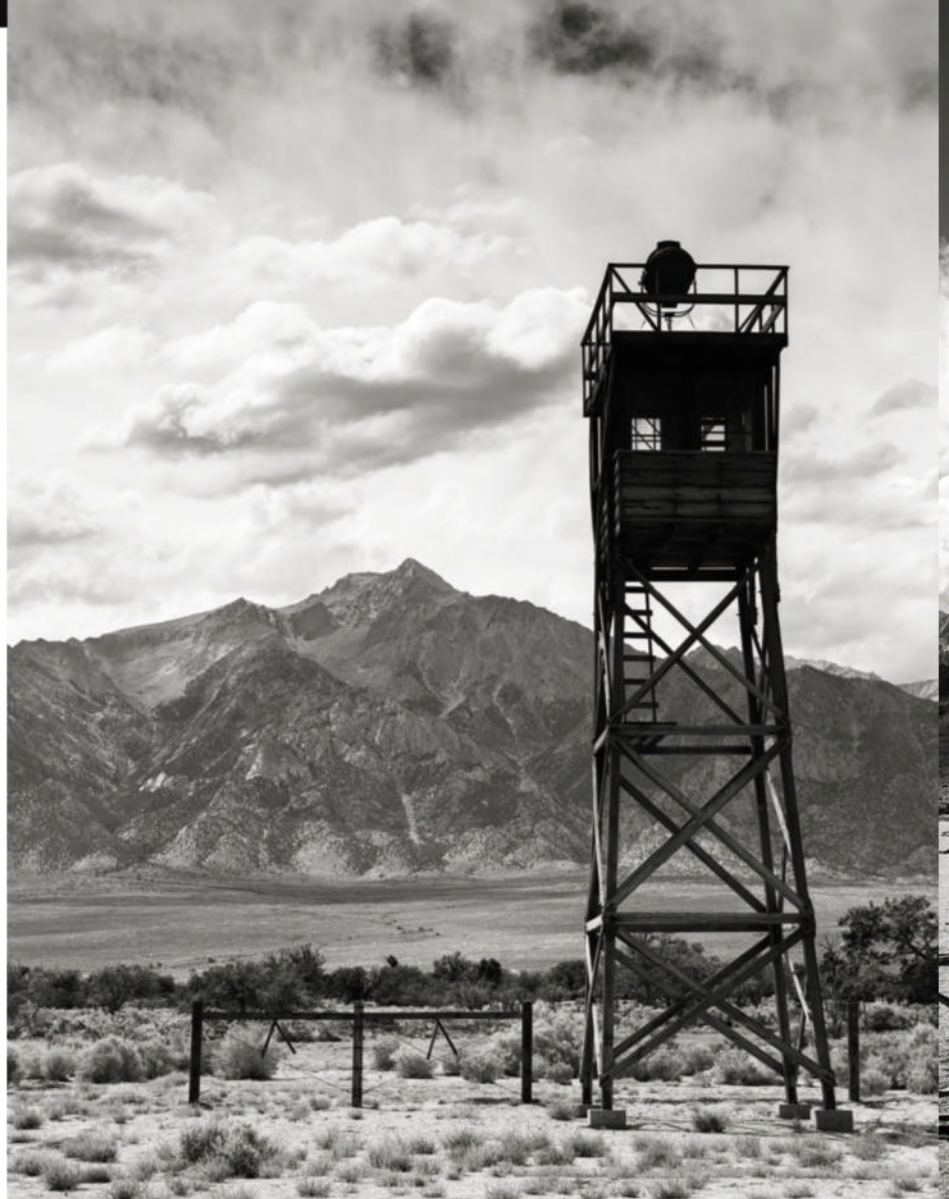
Nearly 29 million meals were served at Manzanar when it operated as one of 10 camps—the government called them "relocation centers," historians call them "concentration camps"—where 120,000 people, mostly American citizens, of Japanese ancestry were imprisoned between 1942 and 1945. At its peak, Manzanar held more than 10,000. And if you don't think they were prisoners, just imagine the barbed wire and guard towers that girdled the camp during the war, searchlights and machine guns pointing in toward the confined.

Norman and I pondered the squat iron stove that anchors the kitchen (and would have kept the building from flying away in the endless dust storms that plagued the camp). This is a prop stove—not original to Manzanar but similar to what was here. The meals were by all accounts lousy, "slop suey" to the internees.

We examined the prop pots and pans, plates and cups, and flatware, which had to be washed quickly during the war because it was used three or four times each meal.

But this historic site was not established to celebrate overweening logistics. As the historical marker near the entrance to Manzanar says, "May the injustice and humiliation suffered here as a result of hysteria, racism, and economic exploitation never emerge again."

Consider this injustice: Norman and I both grew up in families that farmed the San Juan Valley south of San Jose, but during World War II, my family had German POWs pick our pears while Norman's parents and grandparents were themselves locked up. Norman's father, Kay Kamimoto, a San Juan farmer, was sent to Poston, Arizona. His mother, a young San Francisco "city gal," Yoshiko Tamura, was sent to Topaz, Utah.



NORMAN AND I went to high school together, and now our children attend the same small San Francisco school. So when I began planning a road trip to Manzanar, I asked Norman to come along. Amid the old photos and wartime artifacts, I didn't want to lose sight of the enormous human toll of the camps. We began our day in the cavernous visitor center, which had served as the high school auditorium and community center during the war. Norman was so busy asking a ranger questions that we had to hustle to get to the morning's first showing of *Remembering Manzanar*. "Because I looked like the enemy," one internee recounts in the film, "I was treated like the enemy." Another former internee recalls, "Young kids would drive by and say, 'Go home, Japs,' and I'm thinking, Oh boy, would I ever love to go home." The film runs just 22 minutes, so you won't need a box of popcorn, but you may want a box of tissues.

We toured the exhibits, including a model of the camp that has all 504 residential barracks, 36 mess halls, and 8 guard towers constructed on a 1:480 scale.

There is not much to see here, but there is much to absorb.

Before heading out to walk the vast grounds, I chatted with

ROADSIDE ESSENTIAL

BEST WESTERN PLUS FRONTIER MOTEL

You can't overnight at Manzanar, so head down to this motel in Lone Pine, where the rooms are named after western stars such as Barbara Stanwyck, and the sweeping views encompass the Sierra and Alabama Hills.

From \$115; bestwestern.com.



Luci?”—that show he’s paying attention. Now I could hear the breeze, and on it, the sound of cars on Highway 395 speeding elsewhere. Finally, Norman said, “I didn’t know about this. But I

guess it makes sense.” Norman was being kind. Where was the sense in incarcerating 2- and 3-year-olds?

A guard tower and obelisk punctuate the sadness of Manzanar.

We scuffled across fields covered in the ever-present dust, coming at last to the Manzanar monument, a

white obelisk with three black kanji characters designed by stonemason Ryoza Kado in 1943. The characters spell out “I Rei To,” which translates to “soul consoling tower.”

IN THE VISITOR CENTER earlier, we had come upon a rack of 10 banners, one for each of the camps. “Look,” Norman said. “The Topaz and Poston flags are next to each other. That’s kind of cool.”

Yes, the two camps where his parents lived, years before they met. Norman hadn’t come here to grasp the Japanese American experience during the war as much as his parents’ experience.

“Rarely did I hear hatred, bitterness, or resentment,” Norman said of his parents, both now gone. “It’s hard to say they were good times. But this was their community and friends. Their resilience is a testament to them, to their desire to become successful afterward with business and family.”

Later Norman told me that walking the grounds, experiencing firsthand the cold and the dust, underscored how tough his parents and their generation had been. “My dad was able to go back to San Benito County and start farming again,” Norman said. “My mom was able to go back to her life in San Francisco. We were not as unfortunate as those who had nothing to go back to.”

Norman made me realize that Manzanar is a Rorschach test. It can be seen as the admonition it was intended to be, a reminder about the dangers of racism run amok, about the need for constant vigilance against the trampling of anyone’s civil rights.

But this isolated site, wedged between the Sierra and Highway 395, can also be seen as a celebration of a community that bounced back after the war, that successfully endured years of unjust incarceration, and that made gardens flourish in the dusty desert.

Patricia Biggs, the interpretive ranger. When I asked what her favorite part of the site is, she didn’t hesitate: “The gardens. I love the serenity there. What has survived are the things the Japanese Americans built. What the government built was gone almost immediately.” The barracks and mess halls were sold for surplus after the war. The footprints of many of the gardens—the cement ponds, rock borders, and ingenious *faux bois* (concrete made to look like wood)—remain.

Zippping up our coats, Norman and I set out for the two residential barracks on the grounds. Both are reconstructions, which don’t do justice to the privations of the originals. “The current ones were built to code,” noted one ranger. We checked out the baseball field (the camp had had nearly 100 men’s baseball teams and 14 women’s softball teams), then found the remains of several gardens. As we headed to the northwest area of the camp, we stumbled upon a marker for the Children’s Village, three isolated barracks for orphans and foster children. The voluble Norman grew quiet.

At my daughter Luci’s school, Norman knows all the kids and teases his favorites relentlessly. He dishes out high fives for every small victory and fires questions—“How’d you do on that math test,

ANCIENT BRISTLECONE PINE FOREST

MILE
43

IT'S EASY TO FEEL YOUNG WHEN YOU WALK among trees that date back more than 40 centuries. Timeworn Great Basin bristlecone pines—photogenic icons with twisted trunks, contorted limbs, and bushy needles—dot the lofty reaches of the White-Inyo Mountains, an arid range that parallels the Sierra. Each pine stands as a testament to graceful aging, its knotted wood shaped by wind, ice, and sand. Size doesn't matter; few bristlecone pines grow taller than 30 feet. But age is

status: Many trees pass the 4,000-year mark and keep on growing. The drive to the bristlecone forest is slow going, with a 6,000-foot ascent from Big Pine and no gas stations or convenience stores along the route. Plan on an hour each way. At the Schulman Grove Visitor Center, walk among the ancients on the 1-mile Discovery Trail or the 4.3-mile Methusaleh Trail. Can't get enough? The Patriarch Grove lies 12 miles down the road. Intrepid hikers take a full day to bag 14,246-foot White Mountain, California's third-highest peak. \$3/adult or \$6/vehicle; www.fs.usda.gov/main/inyo.



TIPS

In the last half of September, **Bishop's aspen groves** don golden autumn coats. Drive up West Line Street to Lake Sabrina, South Lake, and North Lake. bishopvisitor.com.

Jerky is the ultimate road-trip food. It's packed with protein and doesn't require refrigeration. Stock up on strips of buffalo, salmon, and elk at **Mahogany Smoked Meats**. 2345 N. Sierra Hwy., Bishop; smokedmeats.com.



ROADSIDE ESSENTIALS

COPPER TOP BBQ

This take-out hub is the only place in Big Pine where you'll find a crowd. Hungry diners share the outdoor space with a monster grill and smoker. Order tri-tip, ribs, chicken, or pulled pork at the window, then stake your claim on a picnic bench and admire the turrets and towers of the Palisades. \$\$; 310 N. Main St.; coppertopbbq.com.

LAW'S RAILROAD MUSEUM

The name doesn't do it justice. Sure, there's an 1880s steam locomotive, depot, and turntable, but they're upstaged by 28 wooden buildings crammed with curios—antique sewing machines, 19th-century dentist tools, and vintage cameras. \$5 donation suggested; Silver Canyon Rd., northeast of Bishop; lawsmuseum.org.





MAMMOTH LAKES BASIN

MILE
102

NAYSAYERS CLAIM THAT MAMMOTH LAKES IS OVERRUN BY DAY SPAS, log mansions, and corporate gloss. But any local can tell you that Mammoth Lakes still has soul, and it's easy to find in the glacier-carved Mammoth Lakes Basin.



TIP

Take the **Mammoth Mountain Panorama Gondola** when it opens at 9 a.m. for an uncrowded trip and views of the Minarets, Mono Lake, and 400 miles of Sierra peaks. \$25; mammothmountain.com.

Follow Lake Mary Road south toward Red Mountain, where the town was founded after an 1877 gold and silver strike. Head to Coldwater Campground for a self-guided tour of the Mammoth Consolidated Mine's buildings and equipment. Nearby, campgrounds and cabin resorts are tucked into the red firs bordering four lakes: Twin, Mary, Mamie, and George. Bikers ride the paved Lakes Basin Path, and hikers take their pick of trails. Follow the short path from Lake George to TJ and Barrett Lakes, or the steeper trail that leads to Crystal Lake, which fills a granite bowl below 10,364-foot Crystal Crag. In September, the Kamikaze Bike Games host the world's fastest fat-tire race, with bikers speeding downhill at 60-plus miles per hour. visitmammoth.com.

ROADSIDE
ESSENTIAL

THE LAKEFRONT RESTAURANT, TAMARACK LODGE

Score one of 10 tables, then sit down to a dinner of line-caught Alaskan halibut, pan-roasted venison strip loin, or Kurubuta pork belly. The knotty-pine dining room is plain Jane, but the food is not. Save some daylight for a walk around Twin Lakes. \$\$\$; 163 Twin Lakes Rd.; lakefrontmammoth.com.

DEVILS POST-PILE NATIONAL MONUMENT

MILE
114



GEOLOGY MEETS GEOMETRY AT THIS MASSIVE basalt oddity alongside the Middle Fork of the San Joaquin River. Lava flowed through this river valley some 82,000 years ago, filling it 400 feet deep. After cooling, it contracted and cracked into six-sided columns. In the summer, Devils Postpile is a bustling tourist attraction, but shortly after Labor Day, the mandatory shuttle bus quits for the season. At that point, you can drive yourself into the valley. From the ranger station, walk 15 minutes to the base of the 60-foot-high columns. The standard first impression: *Wow, that's weird.* Most columns stand uniformly straight, but a few curve like candles in the sun. On the pile's summit, find a cross section that was polished

by glaciers, creating a mosaic of shiny honeycombed tiles.

Just 2 miles downriver lies another geologic prize. Rainbow Falls, one of California's most photographed waterfalls, plunges 101 feet over a rhyodacite lip. A half-mile farther lies Lower Falls. Visit both, then head to Red's Meadow Resort for a milkshake or homemade pie at Mule House Café. *Monument:* \$7/shuttle (\$10/vehicle after Sep 9); *nps.gov/depo*. *Cafe:* \$\$; *redsmeadow.com*.



TIP

About an hour before sunset, set off to **Minaret Vista** near the Devils Postpile entrance station to watch the sun drop behind the Ritter Range, a chain of serrated peaks and pinnacles. visit mammoth.com.



LEFT: CHRISTIAN DWORSCHAK/IMAGE BROKERY/CORBIS

JUNE LAKE

MILE
115

MOST PEOPLE THINK OF MAMMOTH LAKES AS THE PARTY TOWN and of June Lake as the party town's introverted cousin—quieter, doesn't like to show off. But June Lake can have fun too, especially at June Lake Brewing.

This warehouse-style microbrewery caters to the young, athletic crowd with free foosball and a thirst-arresting double IPA. But craft beer is not the only reason to drive to June Lake, especially in fall when the quaking aspens put on a show. As summer days shorten, the trees' translucent leaves glow like stained-glass windows. To see them, drive the June Lake Loop, starting on the north side to get the full effect. Pass Grant Lake, a deep blue pool nestled in the sagebrush. Try to keep your eyes on the road as you cruise around aspen-lined Silver Lake, then continue past 10,909-foot Carson Peak on your way to Gull Lake and the village of June Lake. The loop is the back door to the Ansel Adams Wilderness, so make sure you get out for a hike. Meanderers will enjoy the 4-mile round-trip to Parker Lake; hard-core trekkers will prefer the steep 7-mile ascent to Gem Lake. *Brewing: 131 S. Crawford Ave.; junelakebrewing.com. Loop: junelakeloop.org.*



TIP

Most trails near June Lake wend right uphill, and the **Fern Lake Trail** is no exception. But it's worth the 1.7-mile climb to this cobalt blue tarn framed by Carson Peak and San Joaquin Mountain.

ROADSIDE ESSENTIAL

DOUBLE EAGLE RESORT & SPA

You're nearly halfway through this road trip, so it's time for a little pampering: a king bed and whirlpool tub, a hot stone massage, and dinner at Eagle's Landing Restaurant with a view of Carson Peak. The Double Eagle Resort has all that, plus a 60-foot indoor pool. Rooms from \$169, restaurant \$\$\$; doubleeagle.com.





MONO LAKE

MILE
125

MARK TWAIN CALLED MONO LAKE “ONE OF THE STRANGEST FREAKS OF NATURE TO BE found in any land,” but that doesn’t deter the 2 million birds that visit yearly as they migrate across the West. In September, phalaropes and eared grebes show up for the lake’s all-you-can-eat buffet of brine shrimp and alkali flies, joining more than 300 other avian species. Mono Lake is a compelling stop for

people too. It’s more than twice as salty as the ocean and, at 65 square miles, it’s as large as an inland sea. The ancient lake has several inlet streams but no natural outlet. In its 700,000-year lifetime, salts and other minerals have washed into its waters and never left. The result? A chemistry experiment that could win any science fair. See the outcome up close at Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve, where a trail skirts past knobby clusters of tufa—off-white mineral formations created when calcium-laden springs bubble up and mix with the lake’s carbonates. Drop by either of two visitor centers: the Mono Lake Committee one, in downtown Lee Vining, or the Mono Basin Scenic Area center, perched on a hill north of town. \$3 entry at Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve; monolake.org.



TIPS

The 27 volcanic cones south of Mono Lake form the **Mono Craters**. It’s a short hike up to Panum Crater, a lava dome that erupted only 600 years ago. monolake.org/visit/panum.

Order the lobster taquito and carrot cake at **Whoa Nellie Deli**, in the Tioga Gas Mart, and discover why it’s renowned for its food. \$\$; 22 Vista Point Rd., Lee Vining; whoanelliedeli.com.

ROADSIDE ESSENTIAL

THE MONO INN RESTAURANT

In the 1920s, guests at The Mono Inn water-skied on Mono Lake. Today this destination resort is more sedate, but the 180° lake view still lures travelers who savor bison short ribs.

Of course, you can chew on the scenery too. \$\$\$; 55620 U.S. 395, Lee Vining; the monoinn.com.



BODIE STATE HISTORIC PARK

MILE
160

THE STORY OF THE WEST'S GHOST TOWNS IS framed by the antipodal themes of boom and bust, often appearing in the same tale. Nowhere is that more apparent than in Bodie, which was one of the West's rowdiest cities in 1877, when gold-mining fever gripped the Eastern Sierra. Today Bodie is the country's largest unrestored ghost town, with about 200 deserted buildings still standing. What you see at Bodie is only about 5 percent of the original town, which supported 70 saloons to quench the thirst of 8,000 townspeople. Peer in the buildings' windows to see tables and chairs, wallpaper and calendars, and textbooks lying open on schoolhouse desks, all abandoned

when the mining boom went bust. Take a tour of the 116-year-old Standard Mill, where ore was processed into gold. Walk through the town's graveyard, and you'll find the rowdy, the lawless, and the innocent all buried here. During Bodie's heyday, residents withstood ravaging fires, harsh windstorms, and rampant bad behavior—stage holdups, constant street fights, and public drunkenness. Maybe that's why most people just walked away when Bodie's rich veins were depleted in 1882, though a few hopefuls kept mining here until the 1940s. *\$5 entry, \$7 tour; bodiefoundation.org.*



TIP

Hungry? Bridgeport regulars know the drill: a burger or burrito at the **Burger Barn**, then ice cream at the **Jolly Kone**. That's been the combo for cattle barons and rodeo queens. *Burger Barn: \$; 152 Main St.; (760) 932-7775. Jolly Kone: 178 Main; (760) 932-7555.*

ROADSIDE ESSENTIAL

TRAVERTINE HOT SPRINGS

It's liquid nirvana: five mineral pools in an alkali-encrusted meadow a couple of miles east of Bridgeport. Spas charge big bucks for this kind of mud. Here it's free, plus it comes with a bonus view of the Sawtooth Ridge. The thermally heated water is scalding at its source, but it cools to a comfortable temperature as it flows down travertine rock formations to reach the pools. *monocounty.org.*

GENOA

MILE
220

THE SIGN ON THE FRONT DOOR OF THE Genoa Bar & Saloon makes the house rules clear: “No horses allowed inside.” Tie up Trigger and stop in for a libation at Nevada’s oldest thirst parlor, where cowboys have been tossing back cool ones since 1853. Scan the array of dusty bric-a-brac for an oversize leopard-print bra, which locals swear belongs to Raquel Welch. Other celebrities who shared these barstools were Mark Twain, Clark Gable, and Teddy Roosevelt. Shine a flashlight in the bar mirror and you can see its flashy silver backing, or “diamond dust.” This saloon is the unofficial town hall for tiny Genoa, which runs about two blocks north to south. Mormon traders set up the Nevada Territory’s first permanent settlement here, a fact celebrated at Mormon Station State Historic Park. A statue honors John “Snowshoe” Thompson, whose job was to ski from Placerville to Genoa and

back again (90 snow-covered miles each way) to deliver mail, medicine, and supplies. The Norwegian immigrant made the trip in three days, using 10-foot-long oak skis. Despite his 20 winters of service from 1856 to 1876, the government never delivered a paycheck. *Saloon: 2282 Main St.; genoabarandsaloon.com. Genoa: genoanevada.org.*



TIP

Visit the 1862 David Walley’s Hot Springs Resort and Spa early in the day and watch the steam rise over the nearby marsh. \$129; 2001 Foot-hill Rd., Genoa; 1862hot springs.com.



ROADSIDE ESSENTIALS

J.T. BASQUE BAR & DINING ROOM

Dollar bills cover the ceiling, and cowboy hats line the walls. Order a Picon Punch, the fabled orange bitters-grenadine cocktail of Basque shepherders who made their way from the Pyrenees to tramp with Nevada’s livestock. If you’re hungry, get the grass-fed Basco burger. \$\$; 1426 U.S. 395 N., Gardnerville; jtbasquenv.com.

NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM

Vintage locomotives and train cars put on a show, but that’s nothing new—many are retired from Hollywood gigs. Baby boomers will recognize the 1875 Inyo locomotive, which appeared in the 1960s TV series *The Wild, Wild West*. \$6; 2180 S. Carson St., Carson City; nevadaculture.org.





RENO RIVER WALK & ARTS DISTRICT

MILE
270

ROADSIDE ESSENTIALS

NATIONAL AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM

Americans love their automobiles, but Bill Harrah loved them best.

The casino mogul owned most of the 200-plus cars and motorcycles on display, including John Wayne's 1953 Corvette and James Dean's 1949 Mercury.

\$10; 10 S. Lake St., Reno; automuseum.org.

PEG'S GLORIFIED HAM N EGGS

At Peg's, the menu is all about the numbers: 23 rotating versions of eggs Benedict (try Chef George's if it's available), three layers of french toast holding up the Monte Cristo, and specialties from the 50th state—loco moco and island pork chops. Visit any of Peg's four Reno locations and plan to split your meal in two.

\$; eatatpegs.com.

THE RENO ARTS DISTRICT, HIP YET UNPRETENTIOUS, HAS infused the Biggest Little City with flair. Revive your muses with a stroll along the River Walk, where the Truckee traipses through the city. The afternoon breeze animates 63 kinetic metal sculptures mounted on light poles (get a self-guided art map at the Sierra Street visitor center). The Wild River Grille has riverside seating. Order a salmon BLT or a warm brie sandwich and let the crumbs fall to Rover, who's welcome on the patio. A postprandial amble may take you past Natural Selection, where

you can start your own cabinet of curiosities with oddities like Venus flytraps and Marimo balls (Japanese algae). At the Truckee River Whitewater Park, kayakers paddle in 11 drop pools. Finally, make your way to the Nevada Museum of Art, a four-level jewel built by architect-sculptor Will Bruder. Despite the building's sophisticated exterior, the docents won't scoff at your hiking boots. They get it: You're hip and unpretentious. *Arts District:* renoriver.org. *Grille:* \$\$; 17 S. Virginia St.; wildrivergrille.com. *Natural Selection:* 39 St. Lawrence Ave.; naturalselectionstore.com. *Museum:* \$10; 160 W. Liberty St.; nevadaart.org.



TIP

In a lovely 1907 mansion, **Sundance Books and Music** has new and used fiction and cookbooks galore. The magazines alone will make you toss your Kindle. 121 California Ave., Reno; sundancebookstore.com.

ABOVE THE OWENS VALLEY

Famed as L.A.'s water source, the valley is also legendary for its unruly thermals, which can give flight to long-held dreams.

BY CAROLINE PAUL

I'D NEVER HEARD of the Owens Valley until my friend Lars returned from a paragliding trip, his expression both exhilarated and haunted. His flight had been a cross between a religious experience and a biker bar brawl; hot air boomeranging off the valley floor had punched him skyward, then continued to pummel him thousands of feet high. He kept shaking his head. There were great gaps in his sentences where words just plain failed. I had never seen him so excited and so freaked out.

"You should come next time," he added.

"Sure," I replied, because he was the kind of guy who knew how to build an igloo, climb a sheer cliff in flip-flops, and perform a pericardial thump; the kind of guy everyone wanted to impress, and I was no exception. "Let's make a plan," I said.

Years passed. I switched from flying paragliders to flying ultralights. Lars moved to Colorado. The Owens Valley, stretching roughly from Olancho in the south to Bishop in the north, lurked in my mind as a place I had probably intentionally ducked, and this bugged me. Was I chickenshit? Probably. Did Lars think I was chickenshit?

My chance to ask passed me by. Six years ago, Lars died. I didn't say good-bye in person, something I still kick myself for. That *was* chickenshit. He'd been an adventure buddy and a friend for 26 years. Now he was gone, rocketed skyward by cancer.

Recently I traveled to the Owens Valley to finally fly the unruly thermals. I wouldn't be the pilot—that job was going to fall to Dave Turner, U.S. Paragliding team member, California distance record holder, and founder of Sierra Paragliding, the outfit I was working with on my flight. Would this count as a reckoning if I was strapped, tandem, to one of the best pilots in the world? It would have to do.

Soon Dave and I were staring over the valley floor from the flanks of the White Mountains. This was the Paiute launch, where Lars had stood 20 years before, about to get his ass seriously kicked. I was surprised at the serenity. The air was quiet, the view breathtaking. I found myself relaxing into familiar postures: the head tilt upward to look for "locals" (paragliding-speak for birds); the crossed-arm, chin-forward gaze at the tattered wind flag. Even Dave himself seemed familiar—his wide smile, loose-limbed ambulation, and lumberjack scruff. Then it hit me. He reminded me of Lars.

Dave explained how the heat and particular topography could bring about flights that lasted for hours. In the right conditions, expert pilots reached altitudes of 17,000 feet, while the less skilled got hurt. "Our thermals are legendary," he said. "Pilots get

High peaks and a deep valley create big thermals.



their butts handed to them."

That's what I sort of had in mind, but today the thermals weren't kicking up. This wasn't going to be a referendum on my bravery. But did it really need to be?

I felt Lars's presence. I thought, Okay, buddy, let's go flying again.

We launched. Dave circled in mild thermals, and quickly the ground dropped away. I hung from his chest like a baby possum. But I grinned like a third-grader. I'd missed paragliding! Yet so much about it had changed since Lars and I had flown. Now there was speed flying and there were wings that could do loops with ease.

"So what's the most extreme aerobatic maneuver pilots do these days?" I asked.

"Want to see?" Dave responded.

Um.



I'll admit it, I hesitated. But I'd come here to experience the Owens Valley at its raddest. If the air wasn't going to throw us around, why not bestow that honor on Dave?

"Sure," I said.

I'm not certain what happened next, except I saw the ground, then the air, then the ground, then the air. My vocabulary narrowed to just one word, which I spat out with every revolution. Awesome! Awesome! Awesome! When Dave finally leveled off, it took a moment for my diaphragm to find its rightful place.

By now the Owens Valley that lurked in my mind was transformed. Gone was the menace. In its place? Plain old awe. Sure, great forces of wind and heat batted humans about like cat toys, and this was not one of those days. But maybe I didn't need abject fear right now; just the immensity of the valley made me feel puny and mortal.

I asked Dave for a spiral dive (granted), then we set up to land. Ahead of us was the Owens River, sucked into a thin thread by Los Angeles and its need for water, and I could just glimpse the northern end of the shrinking Owens Lake. Yet from the air, the land appeared indomitable, indifferent to our human squabbles and rapacious ways. I'll be here long after you're gone, it seemed to say. I didn't doubt it. "Feet out!" Dave called. I reluctantly obeyed, and we touched down, leaving Lars in the sky behind us, where he had always belonged. ▲

*Caroline Paul has written three books, including **Lost Cat: A True Story of Love, Desperation, and GPS Technology**.*



DIGITAL BONUS Watch Caroline Paul take flight, and get a soaring view of the Owens Valley: sunset.com/paragliding.

BACK to the FUTURE



The only change Randy and Debbie Hild made to the front exterior of their 1964 home in Laguna Niguel, CA, above, was to switch its color from gray to a more organic chocolate brown. Inside, the couple worked with designer Mason St. Peter to expand the living room and kitchen, gain natural light, and give the home a casual midcentury-meets-the-beach vibe.

**It has all the elements
of an epic movie:
an overlooked genius,
a thoughtful hero,
a skilled sidekick.
Randy Hild stars as a
surfer who brought a
piece of history to life.**

**BY JOANNA LINBERG
PHOTOGRAPHS BY THOMAS J. STORY**



T**TWO YEARS AGO,** Randy and Debbie Hild got the kind of gift that makes the past snap into focus. It was a handwritten letter. “It’s my last wish that this home be cared for, be respected” it began, ending with a blessing for the new owners of the “home under royal blue skies.” The couple had just finished painstakingly remodeling their new home in Laguna Niguel, California, and the letter brought them to tears. Without knowing it, they had fulfilled the request of the woman who owned

the 1964 house for nearly 50 years.

For the Hilds, the message marked the end of a long journey that started in 2011. The couple’s daughter, Ali, was leaving for college soon, and the shabby-cool beach cottage where they had lived for 15 years was starting to look just plain shabby. “We sold our house and gave ourselves a 3-mile radius to find a single-story, flat-roof midcentury modern home,” says Randy. They soon narrowed their search to one area sprinkled with original mid-century homes. None were for sale, but Randy started walking his dogs there, hoping to meet residents, and wrote letters asking owners to contact him if they wanted to sell.

One Sunday, the couple found their luck. On a drive through the neighborhood, the Hilds noticed an open front door on an empty house. “Stop the car!” Debbie yelled. “I’m running in.” The owner’s son was checking on the house for his mother, who had moved to be closer to family. He wasn’t ready to sell, but six months later, he called. They negotiated the price on a handshake.

In the meantime, Randy learned that the man behind the development was George Bissell, a lesser-known contemporary of Joseph Eichler’s. “He was the premier architect in Orange County, but he hasn’t gotten a lot of recognition,” Randy says.

The couple vowed to honor Bissell’s vision even while making changes to fit their needs, starting with expanding the tiny kitchen. “It hadn’t ever been touched,” Randy says. He took advantage of transitioning between jobs—he had just left Quiksilver to start his own surf clothing company, M. Nii—to devote six months to getting the remodel right. Randy told designer Mason St. Peter, “Don’t treat this like a museum. If it doesn’t make sense, don’t be afraid to make it livable.”

St. Peter saw potential in the existing cathedral ceilings, impressive fireplace, and the number of windows already in place. “I knew it just needed the right guidance to be magical,” St. Peter says. He left the front of the house, bedrooms, and bathrooms alone, but removed the wall between the living room and kitchen, and extended the newly open room into the backyard, taking the house from 1,700 square feet to 2,000. He also convinced Randy to push the ceilings of the addition up to 13 feet to take advantage of the light from that side of the house.





LIVING ROOM

The home used to end about where the kitchen island does now. St. Peter removed a porch to expand the interior, and tore out a wall dividing the kitchen and living room, left. The family furnished their home slowly, making relationships with dealers at stores like Archive in Laguna Hills. Randy also found that Instagram is a great source. "There's a younger generation of dealers in their 20s and 30s who list there exclusively," he says.

KITCHEN

With three previous home renovations under his belt, Randy had a clear idea of what he wanted for the kitchen, left, centering on a large island for Debbie's

work (she runs a boutique toffee company, Haute Toffee). This one is 6 feet by 12 feet and steps away from a built-in desk for her paperwork.

DINING ROOM

"The quality of light that comes in from this side of the property is so beautiful at all times of day," St. Peter says. He added clerestory windows to mimic the sliding glass doors beneath and let in even more light, below right.

MASTER BEDROOM

This room, below left, has large sliders that lead to the yard and squeak out a view of the ocean. The full-length curtains block light but also add softness to the spare space.

"The pink fireplace is a great element to bounce off the natural materials in the kitchen." —DESIGNER MASON ST. PETER





"I wanted drought-tolerant plants so I could turn the water off and have everything survive. It's pretty darn close." —HOMEOWNER RANDY HILD

BACKYARD

A redo of the kitchen led to pushing the house about 12 feet into the backyard, left, and adding huge sliding doors. "First thing every morning, that back door opens up," Randy says. "It's almost as if you're in the yard, but you're protected from the wind."

GALLERY WALL

Surfing was a natural theme for the art wall, opposite. Randy collected pieces for years before moving into this house, which had the space to absorb them. The piano is a Steinway built the same year as the house.

"It was an absolute surprise," Randy says of the impact the higher ceilings had on the room. "It feels like a studio space by the time you get back here." To maintain that sense of openness, they kept the kitchen minimal: little hardware, no color, and unfussy plywood and concrete for the cabinets and island.

As construction progressed, Randy, Debbie, and Ali pored over inspiration photos from the 1960s decorating books they collect, including vintage *Sunset* titles. They made every design decision together. It was a flawless system, until Randy—inspired by the saturated colors in the old photos—decided to paint the fireplace pink. "It was like a sculpture in the middle of the house, and I wanted to celebrate it," he says. The family agreed on a rosy hue for the front and back of the fireplace, but once it was done, "Debbie freaked out," Randy says. Ali suggested painting all the brick white and leaving just one section pink, and family harmony was restored.

Randy's adherence to his source material didn't stop at the interiors. For a new fence in front of the house, Randy copied a page from a 1968 *Sunset* book and asked his builder to follow it exactly. He did the same for the deck in back. "It made me feel good

to make a decision that was original to the era," he says.

For the outdoor area surrounding those two features, Randy hired landscape architect Ann Christoph, who previously worked with George Bissell's firm. He asked her to plant the garden she would have planted in the '60s, but as low-water and native as possible. She filled the yard with structural foliage, bonsai junipers, and a black pine tree. "It's super-classic midcentury modern," Randy says of the results.

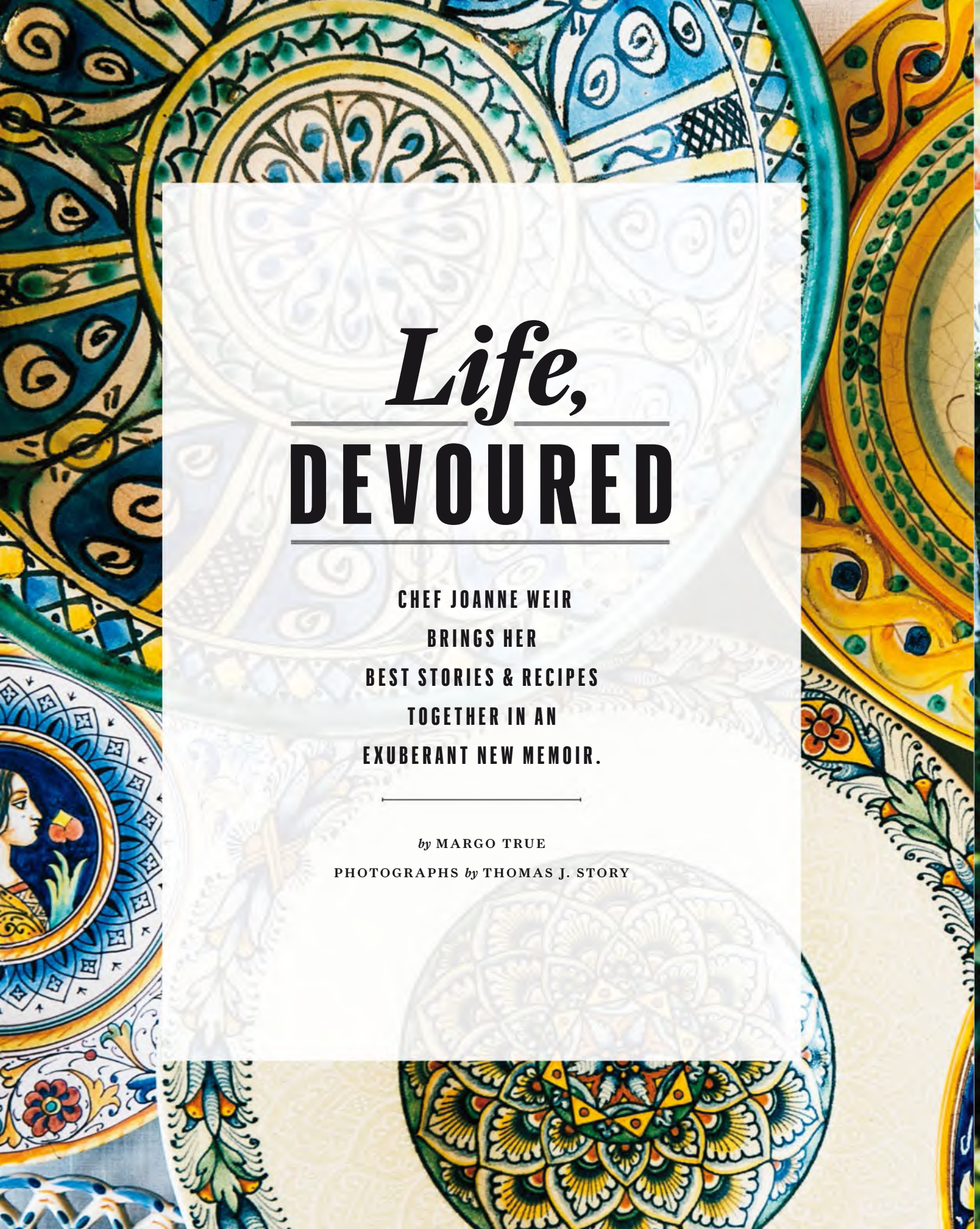
In his own surfer-dude way, he's echoing the previous owner's love for the home. "The letter passed on the responsibility to take care of this house," Randy says. "And we will—we want this to be the last home we live in." Today, the framed letter sits on the bookshelf in the family's living room, a small piece of the history Randy worked to bring to light.

DESIGN: Mason St. Peter, Los Angeles and San Francisco; *mason.stpeter.com*. **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE:** Ann Christoph, South Laguna, CA; *ac-la.com*. ▲



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Life, **DEVoured**

CHEF JOANNE WEIR
BRINGS HER
BEST STORIES & RECIPES
TOGETHER IN AN
EXUBERANT NEW MEMOIR.

by MARGO TRUE

PHOTOGRAPHS *by* THOMAS J. STORY



JOANNE WEIR
— at the —
FERRY PLAZA FARMERS MARKET
in San Francisco

W

HEN SHE WAS 9 YEARS OLD, Joanne Weir mixed 1½ cups of baking soda into her oatmeal cookie dough instead of 1½ teaspoons—and watched aghast as the cookies merged into one oozing mass and overflowed the pan.

It hardly discouraged her from cooking. Weir went on to write 17 cookbooks, film 9 PBS television series, teach cooking classes all over the world, and open her own restaurant, Copita, in Sausalito, California. “When I stop to think about it, I can’t believe this is where life has taken me,” she writes, with self-deprecating good humor. That joyful, food-filled life is the subject of *Kitchen Gypsy: Recipes and Stories from a Lifelong Romance with Food* (Oxmoor House), out this month.

A team of us at *Sunset* helped Weir produce her book, and it has been a delight to see her decades of adventures in the kitchen appear on the page. She describes her experiences with such gusto that you can practically taste them, starting with the tangy sweetness of her first tomato sandwich. (Weir was born into a family of farmers in New England, with a mother who made everything from scratch.)

We’ve brought you some of those tales, and the recipes that go with them, in these pages: The strawberry tart from a lunch at Château Mouton Rothschild, in Bordeaux, when Weir was in her early 20s. Pizza from a life-changing visit to Chez Panisse. An anise-scented carrot soup—her first original recipe—created for her cooking teacher, the famously rigorous Madeleine Kamman.

Page by page, Weir reveals the twists of fate that made her the chef she is today. Invited by a friend, in the 1990s she starts to teach cooking classes in Australia, then around the world, using local ingredients to make dishes that are, she says, “distinctly my own” (see the halibut skewers, page 76). Back in California decades later, she snags a great restaurant partner, Larry Mindel, based in part on her prowess with tequila; you’ll find her spiked chocolate milk shake recipe, straight from the Copita kitchen, on page 77.

Throughout the book, peak moments are part of the ride—her screams of delight over being hired at Chez Panisse, moonlit dinners in Morocco, a broken water main at her cooking class in Piedmont, Italy, that lasts for several hot, sticky days. During a class visit to a butcher shop in Tuscany, one of her students disappears into the walk-in refrigerator with an employee. “We were just there for some chicken and somehow found ourselves in the middle of a Tuscan love affair,” she writes. By the end of Weir’s lively book, you won’t want to leave her table.



ARTESA
ARTICULOS DE REGALO
LLADRO-MA



SWEET SUMMER

Strawberry Tart

SWEET SUMMER *Strawberry Tart*

SERVES 8

After finding a fly in her bottle of Mouton Cadet Rouge, Weir, then 24, had the gumption to mail the insect to the wine's maker, Château Mouton Rothschild, one of the top wineries in the world. In response to her complaint, she received an invitation to lunch at the château. She booked a flight immediately. This recipe is her re-creation of the day's finale—a tart “topped with a silky smooth kirsch pastry cream and crowned with perfectly glazed, ripe red strawberries.”

SHORTCRUST PASTRY

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tbsp. sugar
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- ¼ tsp. grated lemon zest
- ½ cup unsalted butter, cubed
- ½ tsp. vanilla extract

PASTRY CREAM

- 2 cups whole milk
- Large pinch of kosher salt
- 3 tbsp. cornstarch
- ½ cup plus 1 tbsp. sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tbsp. kirsch
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 2 cups medium-size strawberries, hulled
- 1 cup strawberry jam, strained

1. Make pastry: In a bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, salt, and lemon zest. Scatter butter over flour mixture and, using your fingers, work it into flour until mixture is the consistency of coarse cornmeal. In a bowl, stir together 1 tbsp. water and the vanilla. Drizzle vanilla mixture over flour-butter mixture and stir with a fork until evenly moistened. Gather dough into a ball, wrap in plastic wrap, and let rest 30 minutes.
2. Press pastry evenly onto bottom and up sides of a 9-in. round tart pan with a removable rim. Line tart shell with foil and place in the freezer 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 375°.

3. Fill tart shell with pie weights or dried beans and bake until light golden brown, 15 to 20 minutes. Remove pie weights and foil and continue to bake until tart shell is baked all the way through, about 5 minutes longer. Let cool completely on a cooling rack.
4. Make pastry cream: In a heavy saucepan, combine milk and salt over medium-high heat and heat until small bubbles appear along edges of pan. Meanwhile, in a bowl, whisk together cornstarch and sugar. Add eggs and whisk until smooth. Slowly drizzle half of milk into egg mixture while whisking constantly. Pour egg-milk mixture back into saucepan of hot milk, return pan to medium heat, and continue cooking, whisking constantly, until custard thickens, about 2 minutes (do not boil). Remove from heat and pour through a fine-mesh strainer into a bowl. Stir in kirsch and let cool 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add butter and stir until combined. Cover bowl with plastic wrap, pressing wrap directly onto top of pastry cream, and refrigerate until well chilled, about 2 hours.
5. Spread pastry cream evenly into tart shell. Halve strawberries. Starting at edge of shell, arrange berries, cut side down, in tight concentric circles, covering pastry cream nearly completely.
6. In a saucepan, combine jam and 1 tbsp. water over medium-low heat and stir until jam liquefies. Brush berries with jam. Let set 20 minutes before serving.

PER SERVING 429 Cal., 37% (159 Cal.) from fat; 5.5 g protein; 18 g fat (11 g sat.); 63 g carbo (1.2 g fiber); 110 mg sodium; 97 mg chol. LS/V

PIZZETTA *with* PARSLEY SALAD

MAKES TWO 10- TO 11-IN. PIZZAS (SERVES 4 OR 5)

"I could smell the pizza even before it arrived at our table," writes Weir about her first meal at Chez Panisse Café in 1981. "As our server set it down, I was speechless. In my experience, pizza was doughy crust topped with tomato sauce and gloppy cheese. Sitting in front of us now was a crisp flatbread topped with a heaping mound of tiny, pristine flat-leaf parsley leaves glistening with a garlicky vinaigrette and punctuated with shards of shaved Parmigiano-Reggiano ... If this had been my last meal on earth, I would be dying happy."

PIZZA DOUGH

- 2 tsp. active dry yeast
- 2 cups unbleached bread flour, divided
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for bowl
- ½ tsp. kosher salt

TOPPINGS

- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 4 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 tbsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ⅔ cup coarsely shredded Italian fontina cheese (about 3 oz.)
- ⅔ cup coarsely shredded mozzarella cheese (about 3 oz.)
- 1 large bunch tender, young flat-leaf parsley
- 3-oz. chunk Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

1. In a large bowl, combine yeast, ¼ cup warm (110°) water, and ¼ cup flour and stir to mix. Let mixture sit at room temperature until bubbles are visible, about 30 minutes.
2. Add remaining 1¾ cups flour, ½ cup plus 2 tbsp. warm water, the oil, and salt and, using a wooden spoon, stir until dough comes together in a rough mass.
3. Lightly flour a work surface and turn dough out onto it. Knead until smooth, elastic, and a bit tacky to the touch, 7 to 8 minutes. Shape into a ball. Oil a large bowl, place dough in bowl, and turn to coat on all sides with oil. Cover with plastic wrap and let dough rise in a warm place until doubled, 1 to 1½ hours.

(Or, let dough rise in the refrigerator overnight. The next day, bring it to room temperature before continuing.)

4. Make pizza: About 30 minutes before baking, place a pizza stone on lowest rack in oven. Preheat oven to 500° or to the highest temperature possible.
5. In a small bowl, combine garlic and 2 tbsp. oil and let stand 30 minutes.
6. In another bowl, whisk together remaining 2 tbsp. oil and the lemon juice and season with salt and pepper. In a medium bowl, combine fontina and mozzarella and toss lightly to mix well.
7. Lightly flour a work surface. Punch down dough. Divide it in half and form each half into a ball, but do not work the dough at all. Roll out 1 dough ball into a 10- to 11-in. circle about ¼ in. thick. (Alternatively, press and stretch dough into a 10- to 11-in. circle.)
8. Lightly flour a pizza peel (or a rimless cookie sheet) and transfer dough circle to peel. Brush dough circle to within ½ in. of edge with half of garlic-infused oil. Sprinkle half of fontina-mozzarella mixture evenly over oil-brushed dough.
9. Slide onto pizza stone and bake until golden and crisp, 8 to 12 minutes.
10. Meanwhile, in a bowl, toss parsley leaves with vinaigrette.
11. Using peel, remove pizza from oven and slide onto a cutting board. Top with half of parsley salad. Using a vegetable peeler, shave 10 to 12 paper-thin pieces of Parmigiano-Reggiano over top of pizza, then cut pizza into wedges. Repeat with remaining dough and toppings.

PER SERVING 496 Cal., 48% (236 Cal.) from fat; 19 g protein; 27 g fat (7.8 g sat.); 45 g carbo (2.2 g fiber); 467 mg sodium; 28 mg chol. LC/LS/V





PIZZETTA
— WITH —
Parsley Salad



CARROT SOUP
— with Anise —



HALIBUT
— & —
*Squash Ribbon
Skewers*

Carrot Soup

WITH ANISE

SERVES 6

Weir created this soup at L'Auberge Madeleine for her teacher, Madeleine Kamman. "Diners were going to fall for this soup before it ever crossed their lips. Its vibrant orange color and sweet smell of fresh carrot mingling with heady notes of licorice would pave the way for their first satiny sip."

- 2 tsp. anise seeds
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 2 lbs. carrots, peeled and cut into pieces
- 6 cups vegetable stock, chicken stock, or water
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 5 tbsp. anise-flavored liqueur, such as sambuca, ouzo, or Pernod, divided
- ¼ cup crème fraîche
- 2 tbsp. chopped chives

1. Toast anise seeds in a small frying pan over medium heat until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a spice grinder and coarsely grind.
2. In a soup pot, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion and anise seeds and cook, stirring occasionally, until onion is soft, 7 to 10 minutes. Add carrots and cook, stirring occasionally, 10 minutes. Pour in stock, bring to a simmer, and cook until carrots are tender, about 15 minutes. Remove from heat.
3. In batches, purée soup in a blender until very smooth, 2 to 3 minutes per batch. Strain purée through a fine-mesh strainer into a pot and season with salt and pepper. Place over medium heat, stir in cream, and heat until hot. Stir in 4 tbsp. liqueur; season with salt and pepper.
4. In a bowl, stir together crème fraîche and remaining 1 tbsp. liqueur; season with salt. Ladle soup into warmed bowls. Drizzle with crème fraîche and sprinkle with chives.

PER SERVING 326 Cal., 63% (205 Cal.) from fat; 2.9 g protein; 23 g fat (14 g sat.); 24 g carbo (4.3 g fiber); 660 mg sodium; 73 mg chol. GF (with GF stock)/V

HALIBUT & SQUASH RIBBON SKEWERS

with Pistachio-Mint Salsa Verde

SERVES 6

One year, Weir led a culinary tour to the Cinque Terre in Italy. "We went out on the Mediterranean, where we drank prosecco and ate seafood cooked on a tiny grill ... I relished the fresh grilled calamari and halibut skewers as I baked in the sunshine and gazed at the crystal blue waters from which the seafood had just come. A few people decided to go for a swim. I won't mention whether bathing suits were involved. What happens in the Mediterranean after 18 bottles of prosecco stays in the Mediterranean." This is her ode to the skewers from that day.

- ½ cup packed fresh mint leaves plus 1 tbsp. chopped fresh mint
- ½ cup packed flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 6 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- ¼ cup salted roasted pistachios, coarsely chopped
- 1 tsp. grated lemon zest
- 1 ½ tbsp. freshly squeezed lemon juice
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh oregano
- 1 tbsp. chopped chives
- 1 tsp. chopped fresh thyme
- 1 ½ lbs. skinned halibut fillets, cut into 1- to 1 ¼-in. cubes
- 4 medium zucchini (about 1 ½ lbs. total)

1. Make salsa verde: Combine mint leaves, parsley leaves, and garlic on a cutting board and chop finely together. Transfer to a small bowl, add 3 tbsp. oil, the pistachios, and lemon zest and juice; stir well. Season with salt and pepper and set aside.
2. In a medium bowl, combine chopped mint, oregano, chives, thyme, and 2 tbsp. oil and stir together. Season with salt and pepper. Add fish and stir gently to coat evenly.
3. Using a vegetable peeler or mandoline, slice 1 zucchini lengthwise into paper-thin ribbons until you reach the core with the seeds, then rotate zucchini and repeat to cut more ribbons. Continue until only core with seeds remains. Discard and repeat with remaining 3 zucchini.
4. Heat an outdoor grill to medium-high (about 450°), or preheat a ridged cast-iron stovetop grill pan over medium-high heat. Have ready 6 metal skewers or bamboo skewers that have been submerged in water 30 minutes.
5. In a bowl, toss squash ribbons with remaining 1 tbsp. oil until well coated. Alternately thread halibut cubes and squash ribbons onto skewers, weaving each ribbon over and under to create a wave effect. Season loaded skewers with salt and pepper.
6. If using an outdoor grill, arrange skewers directly over fire. If using a stovetop pan, arrange skewers on pan. Grill skewers, turning once, until halibut has light golden grill marks, about 2 minutes on each side.
7. Transfer skewers to a platter or individual plates and accompany with salsa verde.

PER SERVING 366 Cal., 73% (267 Cal.) from fat; 19 g protein; 30 g fat (4.8 g sat.); 6.3 g carbo (2.2 g fiber); 126 mg sodium; 52 mg chol. GF/LC/LS

OAXACAN CHOCOLATE

Milk Shakes

SERVES 8

This spiked chocolate milk shake has been on the menu at Copita, Weir's restaurant in Sausalito, California, since day one. "It blends together spiced Oaxacan chocolate and the richest of chocolate ice creams with guajillo chile, cinnamon, vanilla extract, and a generous splash of tequila *añejo*," writes Weir. "It's the richest, most decadent milk shake you'll ever taste, and it leaves you feeling all warm and fuzzy."

- 1½ cups whole milk
- 1½ cups heavy whipping cream
- ⅔ cup sugar
- 4 cinnamon sticks (3 in. long)
- 6 oz. bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped
- 2 tsp. minced chipotle chile in adobo sauce
- 7 large egg yolks
- Pinch of guajillo chile powder
- ½ tsp. vanilla extract
- ¼ cup tequila *añejo*
- 10 ice cubes

1. In a saucepan, combine milk, cream, sugar, and cinnamon. Heat over medium heat, stirring, until small bubbles appear along edges of pan and sugar has dissolved. Cover; set aside off the heat to steep 2 hours.
2. Put chocolate and chipotle in a heatproof bowl and set aside. In a bowl, whisk egg yolks until blended. Return steeped milk mixture to medium heat to warm. Drizzle milk mixture into yolks, whisking constantly, then pour milk-egg yolk mixture back into saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens, 2 to 4 minutes. Do not boil.
3. Remove from heat and strain through a fine-mesh strainer set over bowl of chocolate. Add chile powder and vanilla, then whisk until chocolate has melted and mixture is smooth. Cover and chill until cold.
4. Pour chilled custard into an ice cream maker and freeze according to manufacturer's instructions. Transfer ice cream to an airtight container and store in the freezer until ready to make milk shakes. You will have about 1 generous quart; plan to use it within 1 week.
5. To make milk shakes, in 2 equal batches, combine ice cream, tequila, and ice cubes in a blender. Process until ice cubes are completely incorporated, 1 to 1½ minutes. Stir batches together, mixing well. Pour into glasses to serve. 🍷

PER SHAKE 423 Cal., 66% (281 Cal.) from fat; 6.3 g protein; 31 g fat (17 g sat.); 32 g carbo (1.7 g fiber); 53 mg sodium; 250 mg chol. LS/V



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Food & Drink

Take your
pick
6 FIG VARIETIES
p. 80

PEAK
SEASON

SWEET ON FIGS

*Savor this luscious fruit roasted
with chicken, tossed in
salad, and cloaked
in chocolate.*

PEAK SEASON

FIG, HAZELNUT, and GOAT CHEESE SALAD

SERVES 4 / 25 MINUTES

Crunch, sweetness, and a touch of richness—this recipe has everything you want in a salad. Dress the greens separately, then tuck in the soft figs and cheese so they keep their shape.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ½ cup hazelnuts | 2 tbsp. chopped fresh mint leaves |
| ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil | 8 figs, preferably a mix of green and black varieties (see “6 Figs to Try,” below), stems trimmed, halved (quartered if large) |
| 1½ tbsp. sherry vinegar | 4 oz. mild fresh goat cheese, at room temperature, crumbled |
| 1 tsp. Dijon mustard | |
| ½ tsp. honey | |
| ¼ tsp. each kosher salt and pepper | |
| 2 qts. (4½ oz.) loosely packed Little Gem* lettuces or torn pieces of romaine hearts | |
| ¼ cup thinly sliced red onion | |

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Toast hazelnuts on a rimmed baking sheet until fragrant and golden beneath skins, 11 to 12 minutes. Rub in a kitchen towel to remove loose skins, then chop roughly.
2. Whisk together oil, vinegar, mustard, honey, salt, and pepper in a large bowl. Add lettuces, onion, mint, and nuts and gently toss to coat. Tuck in figs and cheese.

**Find Little Gem lettuce, a kind of miniature romaine, at farmers' markets and well-stocked grocery stores.*

PER SERVING 390 Cal., 69% (270 Cal.) from fat; 9 g protein; 31 g fat (7 g sat.); 25 g carbo (5.4 g fiber); 233 mg sodium; 13 mg chol. GF/LS/V

6 figs to try Once dominated by dried fruit, California's fig industry, centered in the Central and Coachella Valleys, now sells a number of fresh varieties as well. Each is a little different—so try them all. Fresh figs are perishable; chill, loosely wrapped, up to 3 days.



BLACK MISSION
Purple-black skin and vermilion flesh; earthy, floral flavor.



BROWN TURKEY
Purple-chocolate exterior; full, fruity flavor.



CHICKEN and ROASTED FIGS

SERVES 4 / 45 MINUTES

Figs get a nice jammy texture as they cook with chicken in the garlic-honey sauce. For crisp chicken skin, resist the urge to spoon sauce over it during baking.

2 tbsp. good-quality (cask-aged) red wine vinegar

1 tsp. cornstarch

¼ cup honey

2 lbs. (4 to 6) bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs

1 tsp. kosher salt, divided

¾ tsp. pepper, divided

2 tbsp. olive oil

3 large shallots, thinly sliced

6 garlic cloves, chopped

2 tbsp. chopped fresh oregano leaves, plus 2 tbsp. whole leaves

8 to 10 figs, stems trimmed, halved (quartered if large)

1. Preheat oven to 400°. In a small bowl, whisk together ¼ cup water, the vinegar, and cornstarch. Whisk in honey and set aside. Sprinkle chicken on both sides with ¾ tsp. salt and ½ tsp. pepper.

2. Heat a heavy 12- to 14-in. ovenproof frying pan over medium-high heat until hot. Add oil and swirl to coat,

then add chicken skin side down and brown until skin is deep golden and crisp, 8 to 10 minutes. Turn over and brown other side, 2 to 3 minutes more. Transfer chicken to a plate and set aside.

3. Discard all but 2 tbsp. fat from frying pan, reduce heat to medium, and cook shallots until translucent, 3 to 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook 1 minute more. Add cornstarch mixture, chopped oregano, and remaining ¼ tsp. each salt and pepper; cook until mixture bubbles and thickens, 1 to 2 minutes.

4. Set chicken skin side up in frying pan and add figs. Roast in oven until figs soften and caramelize slightly and meat is no longer pink at bone, about 15 minutes. Divide chicken, figs, and sauce among plates and top with whole oregano leaves.

PER SERVING 499 Cal., 38% (190 Cal.) from fat; 33 g protein; 21 g fat (5.3 g sat.); 47 g carbo (3.6 g fiber); 485 mg sodium; 112 mg chol. GF/LC/LS



DIGITAL BONUS Try figs in our gluten-free almond torte, blackberry jam, and more: sunset.com/figrecipes.



CALIMYRNA
Pale yellow;
buttery sweet,
nutty flavor.



KADOTA Light green
skin changes to
amber as it ripens;
delicate flavor.



SIERRA Another
green variety; lightly
aromatic with a hint
of summer berries.



TIGER (AKA PANACHE)
Green stripes on the out-
side, red inside; berry
flavors.

CHOCOLATE and SEA SALT FIG LOLLIPOPS

MAKES 12 / 45 MINUTES

A quick chill between dunks in chocolate ensures that the skewers stick to the figs. You'll need 12 flat bamboo skewers* (1/4 in. wide and 3 1/2 in. long) or wooden coffee stirrers cut to this size; paper or plastic ones slide out.

- 1 cup bittersweet chocolate baking wafers, such as Guittard, or bittersweet chocolate chips
- 4 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 12 figs, preferably a mix of green and black varieties (see page 80), stems trimmed
- 1 tsp. flaked sea salt, such as Jacobsen

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and set aside. Combine chocolate and oil in a 2-cup glass measuring cup and microwave, stirring every 30 seconds, until smooth and liquidy, about 1 minute total.
2. Dip bottom of each fig in a little chocolate to coat and set on lined baking sheet. Working with one at a time, dip skewers about 1 1/2 in. into chocolate and pierce top of fig with chocolate-dipped stick. Chill until chocolate firms and sticks adhere to figs, about 20 minutes.
3. If needed, microwave measuring cup of chocolate in 15-second increments just until thick but pourable. Lift 1 fig from paper and dip all but top third into chocolate, letting excess drip off. Return fig to lined baking sheet and sprinkle chocolate with salt. Repeat with remaining figs.
4. Chill figs until chocolate hardens, 10 to 15 minutes more.

**Find at craft stores, well-stocked grocery stores, and pickonus.com.*

MAKE AHEAD Up to 4 hours, chilled. ▲

PER LOLLIPOP 121 Cal., 42% (51 Cal.) from fat; 0.4 g protein; 5.8 g fat (3.8 g sat.); 19 g carbs (1.5 g fiber); 142 mg sodium; 0 mg chol. GF/LC/LS/VG



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A JUST-PICKED PARTY

GATHER

For a relaxed dinner outdoors, let fresh summer ingredients do the work for you.

By Alison Gwinn

WHEN CHEF ALEX SEIDEL hosts a party at his farm in Larkspur, Colorado, only one thing is rarefied: the location (7,200 feet above sea level, with views west to meadows and trees). Everything else is as low-key as Seidel himself. “No fuss, no muss—that’s what I like,” says the chef, who owns Denver restaurants Fruition and the new Mercantile Dining & Provision. “We’ll scatter around hay bales to sit on. We might have a bonfire. It’s gorgeous out here under the stars.”

Seidel grows vegetables, raises sheep and pigs, and makes cheeses on the 10-acre farm he bought in 2009. “From the time I started cooking, the ingredients were what inspired me,” Seidel says. That’s his approach to parties too. “Every dish doesn’t have to be a 15-step concoction,” he says. “Get some fresh ingredients, highlight those, and what you’ll get is deliciousness and fun.”



Chef Alex Seidel prepares a dinner for friends on the grounds of his property, Fruition Farms Dairy & Creamery, in Larkspur, Colorado.

Seidel's party tips



START WITH A BANG. “I like to set out a board with assorted cheeses—including our own—along with salumi, salmon rillettes, homemade mustard, jardiniere pickles, and ‘bread and butta’ pickles.”

SAY IT WITH ONION TOPS. “We decorate the table with whatever happens to be growing around here: sunflowers, scabiosa, and

larkspur, but also mustard flowers and onion tops.”

THINK QUALITY, NOT QUANTITY. “My wife, Melissa, and I believe in portion control, because it’s healthier. And I’d rather people have room to try a bit of everything—meat, salad, vegetables, pasta.”

OFFER A FUN SIP. “We like to do

a seasonal cocktail in a mason jar with a lid [see sunset.com/bourbon-drink for a butter-washed bourbon drink]. When guests arrive, you just pour the infused liquor over ice.”

ADD A TWIST. “Every occasion should be different. If you have the same party over and over, it’s no longer a party—it’s just the same old thing.”

The fast lane
from
ATTRACTION to
OBSESSION

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HEIRLOOM TOMATO SALAD with ARUGULA, BURRATA, and EGGPLANT CROUTONS

SERVES 6 TO 8 / 1½ HOURS

For this salad, Seidel uses a mix of tomato varieties—whichever are ripest at the moment in his greenhouse. The eggplant “croutons” are small cubes, breaded in seasoned *panko* and briskly fried. Fruition Farms also produces the burrata cheese, which is fresh mozzarella filled with ricotta and cream.

½ small Japanese eggplant (about 2 oz.)

About 1 tsp. kosher salt, divided

¼ cup *panko* (Japanese bread crumbs)

¼ tsp. dried thyme

Black pepper

6 heirloom tomatoes (about 3 lbs.), in
a mix of colors

2 tbsp. minced shallot

3 tbsp. red wine vinegar

¼ tsp. white pepper

¼ cup canola oil, plus more for frying

¼ cup flour

1 large egg, beaten

8 oz. burrata or fresh mozzarella

4 loosely packed cups arugula

12 basil leaves (optional)

1. Dice eggplant into ½-in. cubes and put in a colander. Toss with ½ tsp. salt and let drain 1 hour.
2. Meanwhile, make seasoned bread crumbs: Heat *panko* in a medium (not nonstick) pan over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, 2 to 5 minutes; stir in thyme and a couple of pinches *each* salt and black pepper. Let cool.
3. Bring a medium pot of salted water to a boil and fill a bowl with ice and cold water. Using a sharp paring knife, core tomatoes by cutting a cone around stems. Score bottom of each tomato with a small X.
4. Blanch tomatoes 20 seconds, immersing two at a time. With a slotted spoon, transfer to ice water. When cool, lift tomatoes to a plate and peel them. Slice tomatoes thickly and arrange over two-thirds of a platter.
5. Make vinaigrette: In a small bowl, combine shallot, red wine vinegar, ½ tsp. salt, and ¼ tsp. white pepper. Whisk in ¼ cup oil.
6. Pour oil for frying into a small pot to a depth of 1½ in. Insert a deep-fry thermometer and heat over medium-high heat until oil registers 325°.
7. While oil is heating, rinse eggplant and pat dry with paper towels. Set a metal cooling rack in a rimmed baking pan and put next to stove.
8. Put flour in a shallow bowl, egg in another, and seasoned *panko* in a third. Coat eggplant cubes in flour. Using a slotted spoon, lift out cubes while shaking off excess flour; drop cubes into egg. Using a second slotted spoon, lift out cubes and drop into bread crumbs; toss to coat. Now use the first (dry) spoon to transfer eggplant to hot oil.
9. Fry eggplant in two batches if necessary until crisp and golden brown, 5 to 7 minutes per batch, and transfer with the dry slotted spoon to drain on rack in pan. Season croutons with salt.
10. Drizzle tomatoes with 3 to 4 tbsp. vinaigrette. Slice cheese thickly and arrange over tomatoes; sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste.
11. In a medium bowl, toss arugula with 1½ to 2 tbsp. vinaigrette. Arrange arugula on platter next to tomatoes. Scatter with warm eggplant croutons and torn basil leaves, if using.

PER SERVING 241 Cal., 64% (154 Cal.) from fat; 8 g protein; 17 g fat (4.8 g sat.); 11 g carbo (2.4 g fiber); 294 mg sodium; 55 mg chol. LC/LS/V

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Heirloom tomato salad; lamb steaks; Seidel's friends at the table; mason jars hold napkins; Seidel in his greenhouse.





GRILLED LAMB T-BONE STEAKS

MAKES 8 CHOPS / 1 ½ HOURS, PLUS AT LEAST 4 HOURS TO MARINATE

Especially in our eat-less-meat era, a lamb T-bone steak, also called a loin chop, makes a right-size serving for one person. Seidel likes to add pecorino to the plate—both for looks and for added savoriness.

- 1½ tbsp. each minced shallot and flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 1 tbsp. each minced garlic, rosemary, and chives
- ½ cup canola oil
- 8 lamb T-bone steaks (loin chops), each 1½ to 2 in. thick; about 3 lbs. total
- Kosher salt
- Pepper
- Pecorino cheese, in hunks
- Chive, lavender, or thyme blossoms (optional)

1. Whisk shallot, garlic, and herbs with oil in a baking dish just big enough to fit lamb in a single layer. Pat steaks dry, then turn in marinade to coat. Cover and chill at least 4 hours and up to 1 day, turning once or twice.
2. Take steaks out of refrigerator 1 hour before grilling.
3. Heat a grill to medium-high (450° to 500°). Pat off excess marinade with paper towels, then season generously with salt and pepper. Grill steaks, turning once, 10 to 12 minutes total for medium-rare (145° on an instant-read thermometer). Transfer each steak to a platter as done and add hunks of cheese. Let rest 5 minutes before serving. Top with chive, lavender, or thyme blossoms, if using.

PER LAMB CHOP 293 Cal., 73% (214 Cal. from fat; 17 g protein; 24 g fat [8.7 g sat.]; 0.8 g carbo [0.1 g fiber]; 58 mg sodium; 73 mg chol. GF/LC/LS

POTATO CONFIT with CORN, RICOTTA, and CHANTERELLES

SERVES 6 TO 8 / 1½ HOURS

Seidel simmers potatoes in a bath of melted butter and oil, a twist on a technique best known for duck.

- ½ lb. plus 2 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 cups plus 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 1¾ lbs. yellow fingerling potatoes, scrubbed
- 1 tbsp. Meyer lemon juice
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- About 1 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- About ¼ tsp. white pepper
- 3 medium ears corn
- ⅓ lb. chanterelle mushrooms (halved if large)
- ¼ cup minced shallot
- 1½ tbsp. minced garlic
- ¼ cup white wine
- 3 cups homemade or reduced-sodium chicken stock
- 1 tbsp. minced flat-leaf parsley
- 2 lightly packed cups pea shoots or watercress
- ½ cup fresh ricotta
- Sprigs of flowering thyme (optional)

1. Heat ½ lb. butter and 2 cups canola oil in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium heat until butter melts. If potatoes are differently sized, halve the larger ones so they all cook at the same rate. Add potatoes to butter-oil mixture, which should just cover them (add a little more canola oil if necessary). Reduce heat to low and cook, covered, until potatoes are tender, 25 to 35 minutes depending on size.
2. While potatoes are cooking, make Meyer lemon vinaigrette: Whisk together lemon juice, olive oil, ¼ tsp. salt, and a couple of pinches of white pepper. Set aside.
3. Transfer potatoes to a plate using a slotted spoon. Reserve 2 tbsp. butter-oil mixture and save the rest for another use (it freezes well). Season potatoes with ½ tsp. salt and let cool.



4. Bring a medium pot of salted water to a boil and fill a medium bowl with ice and cold water. Shuck corn, then cut kernels from cob (stand the cob in a bowl on its narrow end and slice downward with a sharp knife). Add kernels to boiling water. Cover pot. When water returns to a boil, blanch kernels 20 seconds, drain in a fine-mesh colander, and pour into ice water. As soon as kernels are cool, drain again.
5. Heat a (not nonstick) frying pan over medium-high heat. Swirl in remaining 2 tbsp. canola oil. Add chanterelles, season with ¼ tsp. *each* salt and white pepper, and sauté until tender, 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer to a bowl.
6. Gently smash cooled potatoes between your fingers and thumbs. Reheat pan over medium-high heat, swirl in 2 tbsp. reserved butter-oil mixture, and add smashed potatoes. Sauté until golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes. Stir in shallot

and garlic and cook, stirring constantly, 30 seconds. Transfer crisp potatoes to a serving platter.

7. Pour white wine into pan, let sizzle a minute, and add chicken stock. Cook over medium-high heat until liquid is reduced to about 1 cup, about 10 minutes.
8. Stir in remaining 2 tbsp. butter. Add cooked corn and chanterelles, season with salt, and heat through, about 2 minutes. Stir in minced parsley. Spoon corn mixture over potatoes.
9. Toss pea shoots with Meyer lemon vinaigrette and mound over vegetables. Add spoonfuls of ricotta, plus a few sprigs of flowering thyme if you like. ▲

PER SERVING 315 Cal., 55% (175 Cal.) from fat; 7.8 g protein; 20 g fat (6.3 g sat.); 29 g carbo (4.6 g fiber); 267 mg sodium; 33 mg chol. GF (with GF stock)/LC/LS

S DIGITAL BONUS Learn the quickest, easiest way to cut corn kernels from the cob: sunset.com/kernels.



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FAST &amp; FRESH

# WEEKNIGHT COOKING

## SUMMER CHICKPEA RAGOUT

SERVES 4 / 40 MINUTES

This healthy, hearty dinner makes the most of the season's produce. Cut vegetables as you cook to get dinner on the table quickly.



- |                                                                |                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 cup bulgur wheat                                             | ¼ tsp. each kosher salt                                                                 |
| 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil                                 | and pepper                                                                              |
| 1 small onion, chopped                                         | 2 to 3 small zucchini                                                                   |
| 2 small carrots, diced                                         | (about 8 oz. total),                                                                    |
| 4 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth                            | trimmed and sliced                                                                      |
| 1 can (15 oz.) chickpeas (garbanzos), rinsed and drained       | into ¼-in.-thick rounds                                                                 |
| 1 cup fresh or frozen corn kernels                             | 1 to 2 small yellow squash (about 4 oz. total), trimmed and cut into ¼-in.-thick rounds |
| 1 each small red and yellow bell pepper, cut into 1-in. chunks | 2 tbsp. lemon juice                                                                     |
|                                                                | ½ cup finely sliced fresh basil leaves, divided                                         |
|                                                                | Olive oil                                                                               |

1. Cook bulgur according to package instructions.
2. Heat extra-virgin olive oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until translucent but not browned, 6 to 7 minutes. Add carrots and cook until slightly softened, 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in broth, chickpeas, corn, bell peppers, salt, and pepper and bring to a boil. Boil 2 minutes to reduce by about a third.
3. Reduce heat, add zucchini and yellow squash, and simmer, stirring occasionally, until zucchini and squash are tender but not mushy, about 10 minutes. Add lemon juice and ¼ cup basil.
4. Divide bulgur among 4 bowls, top with vegetables, sprinkle with remaining ¼ cup basil, and drizzle with olive oil.

PER SERVING 382 Cal., 32% (122 Cal.) from fat; 15 g protein; 14 g fat (2.4 g sat.); 55 g carbo (9.8 g fiber); 373 mg sodium; 5 mg chol. LC/LS





## SEARED COD in CHERRY TOMATO and TARRAGON NAGE

SERVES 4 / 30 MINUTES

Made with white wine, vegetables, and aromatic herbs, *nage*—a French-style poaching broth—preserves the delicate texture and moistness of fish. Nearly any fish will work in this recipe, but the broth's flavors especially complement mild, white-fleshed ones.

- |                                                                                 |                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 white-fleshed fish fillets (6 oz. each), such as cod, red snapper, or halibut | ¼ cup tarragon vinegar or white wine vinegar         |
| ½ tsp. each kosher salt and ground white pepper                                 | 1 tsp. whole green peppercorns                       |
| ¼ cup unsalted butter                                                           | 1 bay leaf                                           |
| 2 small carrots, thinly sliced                                                  | 4 tarragon sprigs plus 2 tbsp. minced fresh tarragon |
| ¾ cup each vegetable broth and dry white wine                                   | Zest of 1 lemon plus 2 tsp. lemon juice              |
|                                                                                 | 2 cups (1 pt.) cherry tomatoes, halved               |
|                                                                                 | 4 tsp. extra-virgin olive oil                        |

- Season fish with salt and pepper. Melt butter in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Cook fish until browned underneath, about 3 minutes. Transfer fish to a plate, browned side up.
- Add carrots to pan along with broth, wine, vinegar, peppercorns, bay leaf, and tarragon sprigs and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until carrots are tender, 8 to 9 minutes.
- Meanwhile, combine lemon zest and minced tarragon and spread over browned side of fish. Slide fish, browned side up, and any accumulated juices into pan. Add tomatoes and simmer until fish is just cooked through, 2 to 6 minutes depending on its thickness.
- Remove and discard bay leaf and tarragon sprigs. Divide fish among 4 wide, shallow bowls, then ladle vegetables and nage into bowls. Drizzle each bowl with ½ tsp. lemon juice and 1 tsp. oil.

PER SERVING 350 Cal., 44% (155 Cal.) from fat; 32 g protein; 18 g fat (8.2 g sat.); 9.4 g carbo (1.9 g fiber); 425 mg sodium; 104 mg chol. LC/LS

## YAKITORI CHICKEN PAILLARD with CUCUMBER AVOCADO SALAD

SERVES 4 / 45 MINUTES

The Japanese dish chicken yakitori is traditionally made on skewers, but grilling thin chicken breasts instead is even more weeknight-friendly. Marinate a day ahead for extra flavor.

- |                                                                                          |                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 cup mirin                                                                              | <b>SALAD</b>                                                                |
| ⅓ cup sake (rice wine)                                                                   | ¼ cup unseasoned rice vinegar                                               |
| ½ cup sugar                                                                              | ¾ tsp. kosher salt                                                          |
| 4 coins fresh ginger, smashed                                                            | 1 tsp. sugar                                                                |
| 3 garlic cloves, smashed                                                                 | 1 English cucumber (10 oz.), quartered lengthwise and cut into ½-in. chunks |
| ¼ cup soy sauce                                                                          | 1 cup slivered red onion                                                    |
| 4 boned, skinned chicken breast halves (about 1 ½ lbs. total), pounded to ½ in. all over | 1 large avocado, cut into 1-in. chunks                                      |
|                                                                                          | 2 tsp. toasted sesame seeds                                                 |

- In a medium saucepan, combine mirin, sake, ½ cup sugar, the ginger, garlic, and soy sauce. Bring to a boil and cook until sugar has dissolved and sauce has thickened slightly, about 2 minutes. To cool quickly, pour into a heatproof 9- by 13-in. pan and refrigerate until cool. Add chicken and toss to coat. Chill and marinate at least 30 minutes and up to 24 hours.
- Heat a grill to medium-high (450°). Transfer chicken to a platter. Pour marinade into a small saucepan and boil to make a syrupy sauce, about 8 minutes. Discard ginger and garlic.
- In a large bowl, whisk together vinegar, salt, and 1 tsp. sugar. Add cucumber and onion; toss to coat.
- Grill chicken, turning once, until no longer pink in center (cut to test), about 2 minutes per side. Coat chicken all over with reduced marinade.
- Add avocado to salad and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Serve chicken with salad and remaining sauce, for drizzling. 🍴

PER SERVING 567 Cal., 18% (103 Cal.) from fat; 38 g protein; 11 g fat (2.1 g sat.); 59 g carbo (4 g fiber); 1,278 mg sodium; 94 mg chol.





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## Perfect Autumn Olives

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 (6 oz.) can Lindsay Naturals Green Ripe Olives, drained
- 1 ½ tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- Three 2-inch strips orange peel, removed with a vegetable peeler
- 1 ½ teaspoons freshly grated orange zest
- 1 teaspoon coarsely crushed fennel seed

### DIRECTIONS

Heat oven to 375°F.  
Toss all of the ingredients together and place in a 2-cup decorative table-ready baking dish. Place in the middle of the oven and bake until the olives are hot, 5 minutes.

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## WE'RE LOVING ... *Thai Lemonade*

Chef Mai Pham of Star Ginger and Lemon Grass restaurants sure knows how to cool off (maybe it's the Sacramento heat). In the Test Kitchen, we've been drinking her lemonade slushy—amped up with chile, mint, and lime—by the blenderful.



1. You'll need 6 **Mexican limes** or 2 regular limes. Cut off and discard peel and outer white membrane from 4 Mexican limes or 1 regular (keep peel on the rest). Quarter all limes, cut out and discard white cores, and seed.
2. Put 3 cups **ice cubes** in a blender, followed by limes,  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup frozen

**lemonade concentrate**,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cold **simple syrup**, 6 **fresh mint leaves**,  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 **Thai chile** or  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  serrano chile, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. **sea salt**. Whirl until very smooth, stirring often. Pour into glasses and add a **mint sprig** to each. Serve immediately.

**MAKES 3 CUPS / 15 MINUTES**

## RIPE NOW **Crimson pears**

This time of year, keep your eyes open for Starkrimson pears, a stunning red variety. Like all pears, they have to be picked firm or they'll get mealy. To enjoy them at their best, let them ripen at room temperature until they develop a little give and a light floral aroma; they'll be nice and juicy.



## INGREDIENTS OF THE MONTH

## LOCAL BURGER SAUCES

Jazz up end-of-summer burgers and grilled potatoes with a spoonful of any of these sauces from California and Oregon. **Pendleton Original Barbecue Sauce** (\$5.50/18 oz.; [oregongrowers.com](http://oregongrowers.com)) is complex, with a hint of campfire smoke. **Palo Alto Firefighters Pepper Sauce** (\$6/8.5 oz.; [paloaltofirefighters.com](http://paloaltofirefighters.com)) brings lots of heat plus a vinegar kick. **Traina Sun Dried Tomato Ketchup** (\$4.99/16 oz.; [trainafoods.com](http://trainafoods.com)) tastes rich and tangy. **Red Duck Ketchup** (\$4.99/14 oz.; [redduckfoods.com](http://redduckfoods.com)) is a savory take on the classic.





from  
**BETSY  
DASENKO**  
Corvallis, OR

WINNING READER RECIPE

## TURKEY MEATBALLS WITH HERB SALAD

Lime juice and cilantro give Betsy Dasenko's turkey meatballs bright flavor. Try them with a Vietnamese herb salad. **SERVES 4 / 50 MINUTES**

1 lb. ground turkey  
1 tbsp. lime juice  
½ cup panko (Japanese-style bread crumbs)  
1 large egg, lightly beaten  
¼ cup each grated parmesan cheese and chopped cilantro  
½ tsp. each kosher salt and pepper  
2 tbsp. vegetable oil  
Vietnamese Herb Salad (recipe at right)

1. In a bowl, mix turkey, lime juice, panko, egg, cheese, cilantro, salt, and pepper just until combined. Form into 10 balls, about 2 in. each.
2. Heat oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Add meatballs and cook, turning occasionally, until browned and cooked through, about 20 minutes. Serve meatballs over the herb salad.

PER SERVING 575 Cal., 56% (322 Cal.) from fat; 34 g protein; 36 g fat (7.9 g sat.); 35 g carbo (5.8g fiber); 2,076 mg sodium; 147 mg chol.



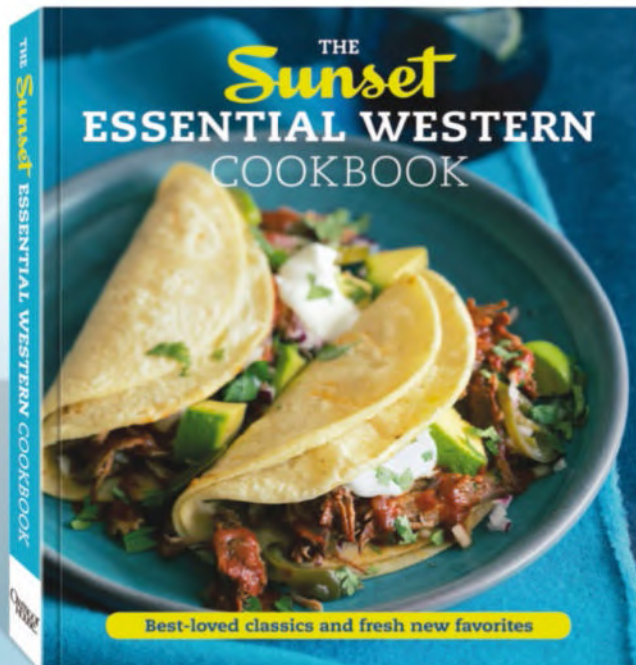
### VIETNAMESE HERB SALAD

In a small bowl, combine ¾ cup **lime juice** (from 6 to 8 limes), 2 tbsp. **sugar**, ¼ cup **Thai** or Vietnamese **fish sauce**, and 1 *each* seeded, minced **red** and **green jalapeño chile**. Set dressing aside. In a large bowl, combine 2 cups *each* loosely packed **fresh mint**, **basil**, **dill**, **flat-leaf parsley**, and **cilantro leaves** with ½ cup *each* chopped **red onion** and sliced **celery** and 1 cup whole **salted, roasted cashews**. Toss with half of the dressing and serve remaining dressing on the side. ▲



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# LESS WATER, BETTER WINE?

SIP

A growing number of West Coast vintners are trying dry-farming—and discovering it's no compromise.

By Sara Schneider

"FEW CALIFORNIA WINES have any terroir," declares Brice Jones, proprietor of Emeritus Vineyards in Sonoma's Russian River Valley and founder of Sonoma-Cutrer. If you're a wine lover, you've heard of the concept of terroir—that wines derive character from the climate, and particularly from the soil, where they're grown. But why slam California wines for lacking this sense of place?

Jones pins the blame on California vineyards' reliance on drip irrigation. Widely adopted in the 1970s, drip irrigation is inarguably an efficient way to dole out water to vines—an emitter at the base of each delivers just the amount needed onto the soil. But when you drip small amounts of water at the surface, explains Jones, the vine forms a shallow, onion-shaped rootball—and no roots dive deep through the layers of earth looking for moisture. And thus no roots absorb what those earthy layers could bring to the wine. As Jones puts it: "You're practically farming hydroponically!"

Jones and a growing number of other dry-farming advocates around the state are convinced that under most circumstances, established vines don't need any water beyond what nature gives them—in fact, they produce better wine when they aren't given any.

Besides delivering a sense of place, deep-rooted vines also produce smaller grapes, with a greater skin-to-juice ratio. And since much of a wine's flavors, textures, and color

come from the skins, the result is more intense and complex flavors, deeper color, and richer textures in the mouth. Plus, says Jones's vineyard manager, Kirk Lokka, "A dry-farmed vine is in tune with the season." Its grapes get fully ripe (winemakers use the term "physiological ripeness," meaning that tannins and other phenolic compounds are mature) at lower sugar levels, resulting in a full-flavored, lower-alcohol wine.

Jones started dry-farming his vineyards long before the drought, at the urging of his former business partner, French winemaker Aubert de Villaine, who was horrified at the thought of irrigation: "You will change the signature of the wine!" (In most of France, it's illegal to irrigate vineyards; but then, most of France gets more rain than California.) Villaine presided over the most legendary region of all—Burgundy's Domaine de la Romanée-Conti—so Jones was convinced

to give dry-farming a shot. Now he reports that many of his neighbors are watching his results closely. In this fourth year of drought, the water available for vineyards varies widely from region to region. Some growers are severely limited; others have decent supplies—but no one knows for how long.

Given the prospects, dry-farming seems eerily relevant. And in a happy coincidence, dry-farmed wines might just be better wines. Weigh the evidence with the water-wise wines at right.

***Dry-farming advocates believe vines don't need any water beyond what nature provides.***

## Best bottles

In our tastings, these wines from dry-farmed vineyards showed an underlying minerality that added interest to more expected flavors.



**Bucklin 2012 Old Hill Ranch Ancient Field Blend** (*Sonoma Valley*; \$34). Notes of black fruit and damp loam are balanced with florals and spice, followed by mixed fruit—strawberry, cherry—with an anise accent on a long finish.



**Emeritus 2012 Hallberg Ranch Pinot Noir** (*Russian River Valley*; \$42). Forest-floor aromas mix with hints of vanilla and green tea on the nose; generous but not overly ripe wild berries are layered with gentle spices.



**Frog's Leap 2012 Estate Grown Cabernet Sauvignon** (*Rutherford, Napa Valley*; \$52). A lovely balance of exuberant fruit (cassis and mixed berries) with a savory herbal side, earth and florals, and tobacco and spice.



**Smith-Madrone 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon** (*Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley*; \$48). A swirl of tobacco, mocha, and vanilla leads to dark plum and briary berries, with solid and elegant structure.



**Stony Hill 2012 Chardonnay** (*Napa Valley*; \$45). After earthy fall apples and juicy melon on the nose, a gamut of bright citrus flavors joins minerality through a long finish. This isn't about oak or butteriness, but rather refreshing fruit. 🍷



**Sara tweets!** Follow wine editor Sara Schneider for tasting tips, wine picks, and news: @SaraAtSunset.



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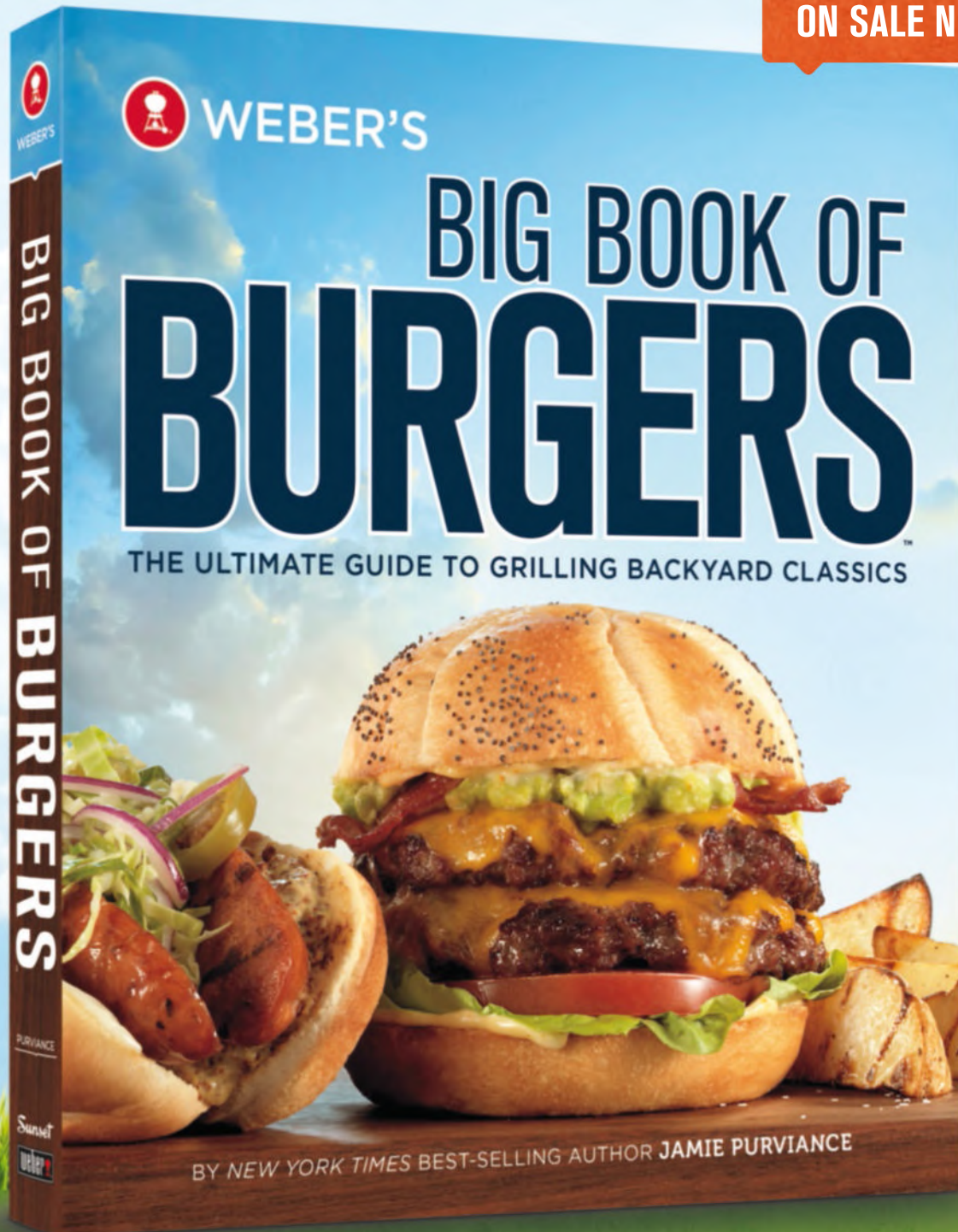
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# ASK SUNSET

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**Q: I have a sloping backyard with no landscaping.** What can I plant to anchor the soil that's good-looking and needs little water? —KATIE GOYA, BELMONT, CA

**DEAR KATIE** Because of their deep roots and low water requirements, many native or Mediterranean-climate plants will do a good job stabilizing your slope. Choices for a sunny slope where you live (*Sunset* climate zone 17) include artemisia, ceanothus, cotoneaster, creeping mahonia, juniper, kangaroo paw, or rosemary (both upright and creeping). Taller accents could be cordyline, flannel bush, or toyon. Limit your palette to a few plants, and group them in swaths to avoid a checkerboard look. (On the Bay Area slope shown above, landscape designer Colin Miller massed lavender, penstemon, and rosemary.) Before planting, lay down jute erosion-control netting, then cut through it to dig planting holes. Finally, install drip irrigation with emitters on the uphill side of plants. (Note: A steep slope might need the attention of a landscape architect or structural engineer; improperly planted or stabilized, it can present hazards in wet weather.)



**Q: We're planning a trip to Genoa, Nevada, in September. Where can we go fishing and sightseeing?** —DOUG GARVEY, SEATTLE

**DEAR DOUG** Funny you should ask—pretty little Genoa (pronounced *gen-oh-a*, unlike the one in Italy) is featured in our Highway 395 story on page 60. Along with the fun stuff mentioned

there, we recommend fishing on the nearby Carson and Walker Rivers. And if you time your visit, you can join in the sweetly charming Genoa Candy Dance Faire (Sep 26–27; [genoanevada.org](http://genoanevada.org)). For 95 years, Genoans have been raising money for town improvements by 1) selling vast quantities of tasty homemade fudge and penuche and divinity and 2) holding a dance. We've been. It's a hoot.

**Q: We have a beautiful ginkgo tree. It's female, so every fall it drops a huge amount of fruit (which, for the uninitiated, smells horrible, like, forgive me, a dog pile). We compost the fruit, but is there anything else one can do with it?**

—LISA PALMER, PORTLAND

**DEAR LISA** We're printing your question as a public service to anyone considering planting a ginkgo. Our advice: Go male! (In this battle of the sexes, there is no contest.) While the trees themselves are magnificent, most people find the fruit (produced only by females) revolting. Yes, one can harvest it for the large edible seed inside (though that calls for wearing gloves, owing to a skin irritant in the fruit flesh). So we say compost away. Now, for aspiring ginkgo growers: Most varieties sold are fruitless males, but check the label to be sure (in saplings, there are no other clues to gender). A classic variety is 'Autumn Gold'; it grows to 45 feet tall and 35 feet wide (so give it room), with buttery yellow leaves in fall. 🍂



Gardener beware: To avoid its fruit, plant a male ginkgo.

Email your questions about Western gardening, travel, food, wine, or home design to [asksunset@sunset.com](mailto:asksunset@sunset.com).



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